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Theatres of Resistance: excavations at Whitechapel Central



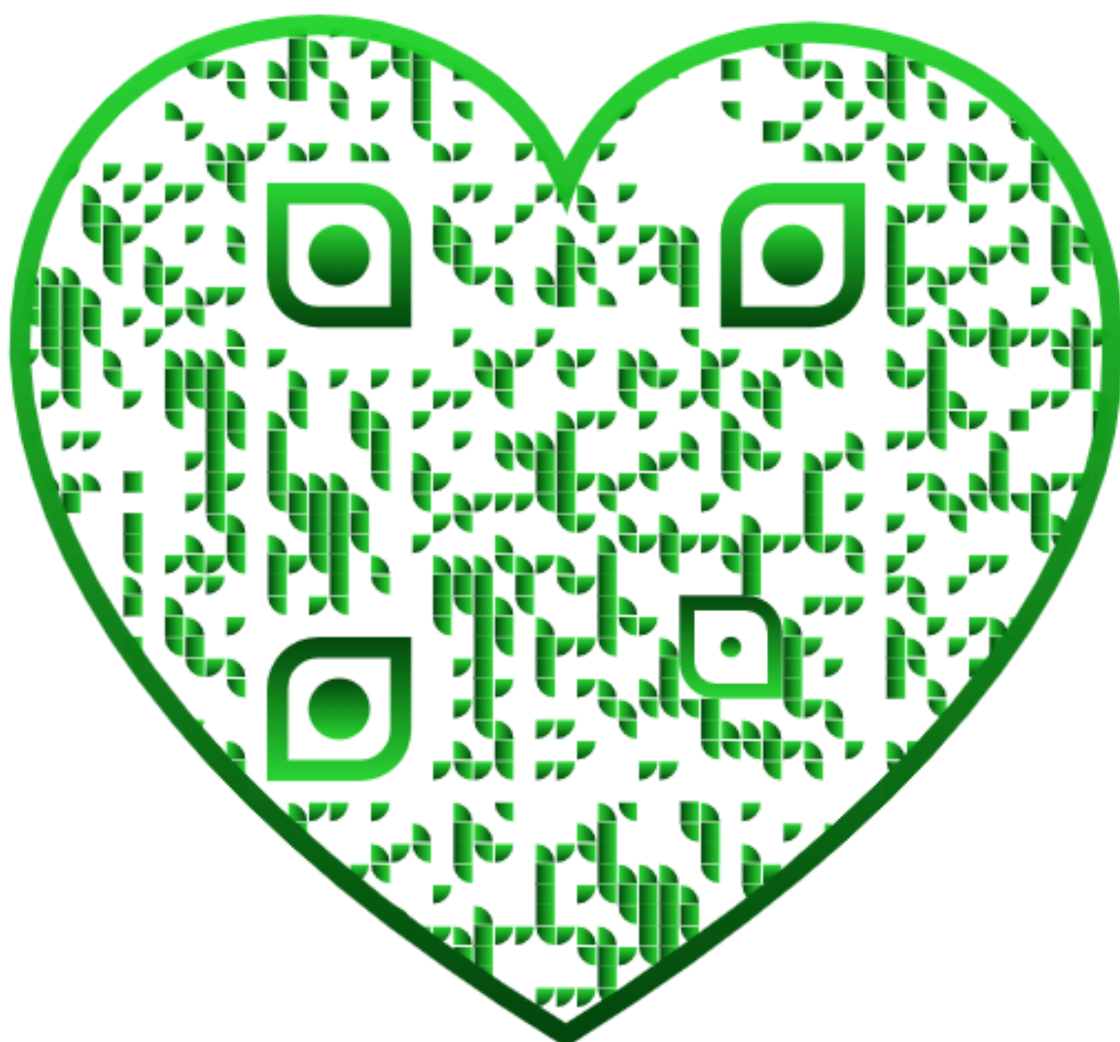
A long view on archaeological societies
A Cro-Magnon sells a masterpiece
**Arches: a tool for protecting
the historic environment**
Heritage for healing



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Udig: Stanwick Hall

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Council for British Archaeology

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Founded in 1944, the Council for British Archaeology promotes archaeology for all. It makes the case for safeguarding our archaeological heritage, and increasing public participation and understanding. It has a growing membership of individuals of all ages and over 600 organisations, and partnerships with Archaeology Scotland, CBA Wales/Cymru and CBA English Regional Groups. The CBA is an environmental charity registered in England & Wales (287815) and Scotland (SC041971), and a company limited by guarantee (1760254)



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From the editor

VOLTAGE TV



My trowel currently sits in a cupboard next to the front door. It looks forlornly at me, waiting for me to spring into action and create new stories of discovery. This is probably my fourth trowel, it's a perfect blade size, ground to perfection, once peeling back ancient stories from London's Walbrook sites about 14 years ago.

Summer is finally here and that means we're entering community and research field season territory and edging into the Festival of Archaeology. Heralding in a new set of connections, stories and discoveries that await us.

It reminds me that enquiry and discovery can encompass a whole of gamut of aspects within archaeology. This process doesn't stand still; it just shape shifts and melds into another form, stories passed down from excavator to site director, find specialists, museum curators, archivists, and community collaborators. A group of individuals watering the initial seed until a whole plant grows, each branch, a layer of additional knowledge.

This edition encompasses those ideas; our first feature, *Theatres of Resistance*, takes us on a journey of London's earliest entertainment spaces and its evolution as a focus for the Black resistance movement in the eighteenth century. Whilst *Heritage for Healing*, encapsulates this year's theme of Archaeology and Wellbeing for the 2025 Festival of Archaeology; it reminds us of the intrinsic connection we have with our historic landscapes, and how enjoying outdoor spaces can have a positive effect on us, as individuals.

For years, Historic Environment Records have been held and managed meticulously for the nations at local depositories. *Arches* highlights a new innovative data system and its adoption by several UK Historic Environment Record teams, to further open access to information and local stories, democratising our collective past. Community involvement has always formed the backbone of archaeology, and traditionally local groups and societies have often served to quench the thirst of enquiring minds.

A long view on Archaeological Societies takes stock on the current situation local societies face and their pivotal role in how we can all advocate for our heritage.

And finally... something to tickle your funny bone. *A Cro-Magnon Painter sells a Masterpiece* is an insightful tour of how stories of cave discoveries and the prehistoric parietal art found within them has influenced the cartoon offerings of *Punch* magazine; contributing to the perception of prehistoric peoples in popular culture.

For letters, comments and article submissions email: editor@archaeologyuk.org

Raksha Dave

On the cover:
*Excavations at
Whitechapel*

Credit: ASE

Radiocarbon dates

Unless otherwise noted, ¹⁴C dates in *British Archaeology* are calibrated at 95% confidence (cal AD or cal BC, expressed as AD or BC), rounded out after Mook (1986). See Radio-carbon dating by

M Christie *et al*, *WikiJournal of Science* (2018), DOI:

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This issue's contributors include

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MOLLY MATCHAM



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FIRST SIGHT IMAGE: MOLLY MATCHAM

FIRST SIGHT
Touching the earth at Geltsdale Quarry

See pp 28 to find out more

Archaeology and wellbeing

The author JL Carr loved curiosity and strange facts; he loved to explore what local places meant to people. His county maps are not just full of information, but works of art, and a celebration of our county differences.

However, it is in his novel, *A Month in the Country*, that he delves deeper into archaeology and wellbeing. By exploring the impact and trauma of the First World War through the two principal characters he, in many ways, created the template for archaeology and wellbeing: Tom Birkin is employed to repair a medieval mural discovered in a rural church and James Moon, an archaeologist, is employed to find a mysterious lost burial.

Both men are suffering from the impact of shellshock (PTSD) and in James Moon we can see how archaeology provides some sort of relief from the nightmares he continues to suffer.

The benefits of archaeology on the health of military veterans have been well documented via the groundbreaking projects of Operational Nightingale, Breaking Ground Heritage, and Waterloo Uncovered. This approach has been extended to supporting members of the emergency services via projects such as Operation Phoenix for Fire and Rescue teams in Northamptonshire.

To build on these programmes and others in the wider heritage sector, in 2022, the Council for British Archaeology and Historic England set up the Wellbeing & Heritage Working Group to create an opportunity to share knowledge and experience from across the heritage and archaeology sector around wellbeing.

Our objective was to raise awareness for the wellbeing value of heritage by working collaboratively and to gather evidence and share best practice.

As a community of practice, we are working towards an agreed framework for incorporating heritage and wellbeing into activities across the sector, including developing the necessary tools (evaluation framework, guidance, training, etc) to support this work, and to facilitate wider discussion, networking, and collaboration.

Where appropriate, we also act to make position statements and lobby for the wellbeing benefits of heritage and the historic environment. This



year, we have made wellbeing the principal theme of the Festival of Archaeology and, in 2024, we co-hosted a major conference at Delapré Abbey in Northampton. The conference was supported by Historic England, Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities (SIAH), and Delapré Abbey, and showcased the diverse range of activities being undertaken in this area across the heritage sector.

Across two days over 100 delegates attended presentations, workshops, and exhibitions, which were also live-streamed for anyone unable to attend in person. You can still watch the presentations via the CBA YouTube channel via the website link below.

The work of the Wellbeing & Heritage Working Group focuses on

two communities of practice that support work on:

- Heritage & social prescribing: This brings together organisations and practitioners interested in learning and sharing practice in social prescribing, as well as co-producing resources and guidance for the sector.
- Evaluation & research gaps: This focuses on priority areas within wellbeing and heritage that are in particular need of further research, evidence, and evaluation.

Supporting this work has never been more critical; in March 2025, it was disappointing to hear that the Community Engagement Team at York Archaeology was being closed following restructuring.

This team was behind the pioneering Archaeology on Prescription programme in York, and demonstrated the benefits of linking archaeology and health care (mental and physical) via social prescribing.

Making the case for the wider impact of archaeology has never been more important and while our key output is still



Top right:
Connecting with people and being active are two aspects of wellbeing in archaeology

Right, bottom image:
Delapré Abbey, Northampton, hosted a 2024 Festival event

to increase knowledge and understanding, the value and impact of what we do beyond this is now well established.

2025 CBA Festival of Archaeology

To build on our work with the Wellbeing & Heritage Working Group, this year, the theme of the Festival of Archaeology is ‘Archaeology and Wellbeing’. We know that archaeology is a wonderful way to make a positive impact on people’s wellbeing. By incorporating it into the Festival we hope to showcase how this can be done, as well as celebrating the very best in archaeology across the country.

There are many ways archaeology can benefit your wellbeing: Spending some time in nature at an archaeological site; a mindful moment studying an object; participating in a skills day or field school to learn something new; spending time with other people at events; or volunteering with a local group.

To support the theme, we are encouraging event organisers to think about archaeology and activities through the ‘five ways to wellbeing’, and how they can create opportunities for people to get active, learn, take notice, give, and connect.

- **GET ACTIVE** – Invite members of your community to share their stories, or create a local trail that includes information about the local area. Use maps as prompts and encourage people to bring photos or objects that relate to their stories. This could be a family-friendly site visit, or a guided walk to an archaeological site.
- **LEARN** – Create a resource that can be accessed on demand throughout the year, or learn a new skill to help you engage with people in a different way.
- **TAKE NOTICE** – Create an event that focuses on the present with sight, touch, hearing, and smell.
- **GIVE** – Each year, organisers give their time and effort to deliver an event or provide a resource; this can be anything from a hands-on activity to an in-person event, and it is an ideal opportunity for your audience to give, via volunteering time, or donating.
- **CONNECT** – Reach out and connect with other Festival



Left and below left: Walking with friends or with a community group in an archaeologically rich landscape can have many well-being benefits

CBA [2]

organisers and ask them to help shape your event, share the marketing, and tell their audiences about your event. You might like to connect with organisations who could help you bring wellbeing into your event – what about a silent disco at a heritage site, or an archaeology themed craft session. The Festival of Archaeology is also an ideal time to highlight volunteering and getting new people involved in your event

or, in the longer term, your group or organisation. The CBA Festival team has a wealth of amazing resources that are available all year round to support organisers. This includes a range of toolkits to help you develop your event and guidance to help you with practicalities like risk assessments, safeguarding, and evaluation. We also have regular event organiser newsletters and online drop-in clinics. ■

Find out more

The Council for British Archaeology's Festival of Archaeology will take place between 19 July and 3 August 2025 with the theme of “Archaeology and Wellbeing”. You can find out more by visiting our website here: <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/festival/about-us.html>

You can search for Festival events via our event listing service here: <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/festival/festival-event-listing.html> You can find out more about the Wellbeing and Heritage Working Group and catch up on the 2024 Wellbeing and Heritage

Conference organised and supported by Historic England, The Council for British Archaeology, Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities (SIAH) and Delapré Abbey, here: <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/our-work/projects/wellbeing-and-heritage-working-group.html>

Number of caves discovered under Nottingham surpasses 900 with latest find

Nottingham has officially recorded its 900th cave, reinforcing its claim as Europe's most cave-rich city. The latest milestone was announced by Nottingham City Archaeologist Scott Lomax, whose work since 2009 has more than doubled the number of known caves beneath the city. In the first three months of 2025 alone, 30 previously undocumented caves have been added to the record, revealing more about the city's extensive subterranean past.

When Scott Lomax began compiling records of Nottingham's caves in 2009, only 425 were known to exist in the city. Since 2017, his research has been responsible for most of the additions, bringing the total to 900 today – and counting. "Through research and archaeological investigations, more caves are being found than ever before and some caves thought to have been destroyed by



twentieth century development have been found to still survive. With continued research and investigation, I am confident we will eventually surpass 1,000 recorded caves," Lomax said.

Many of the city's caves date back to at least the medieval period and include uses ranging from domestic dwellings and storage to industrial and religious spaces. One of the most recent discoveries was made during roadworks in the city centre, when a previously unrecorded cave was identified 5.5m below ground level. Too hazardous to enter safely, the chamber was explored using a drone, revealing a sizeable

space approximately 17m long and 4m wide. A circular shaft leading toward the surface suggests the cave may once have been used to store barrels of beer.

Through documentary research, Lomax found that the site was occupied in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by a distributor for Bass, Ratcliffe and Gretton of Burton-on-Trent. While the cave is likely to date from this period, an earlier origin has not been ruled out.

"These caves are an important part of our city's history, and by identifying them, we can ensure they are preserved and appreciated rather than lost or damaged," Lomax concluded.

While many of the caves are in private ownership, some are publicly accessible, including those beneath the Broadmarsh Centre at the City of Caves attraction, which offers tours and exhibitions exploring their history and use. ■



Right: One of the most recently discovered caves, under Maid Marian Way in the city centre

Council for British Archaeology

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19TH JULY - 3RD
AUGUST

ARCHAEOLOGY
AND
WELLBEING



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Find out more: ArchaeologyUK.org/festival.html

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Melsonby Hoard offers new insights into Iron Age society

One of the most significant Iron Age discoveries ever made in Britain has been announced by Durham University, Historic England, and the British Museum. Unearthed near the village of Melsonby in North Yorkshire, the hoard comprises over 800 metal artefacts dating to around 2,000 years ago, offering a rare window into society, power, and technology at the time of the Roman conquest of northern Britain.

The Melsonby Hoard includes an extraordinary range of vehicle components, among them 28 iron tyres, linchpins, rein rings, and bridle bits – the partial remains of more than seven four-wheeled wagons and/or two-wheeled chariots. Also recovered were elaborate harness fittings for at least 14 ponies, three ceremonial spears, and two ornate bronze cauldrons or vessels. One, lidded and likely used as a wine mixing bowl, was buried at the bottom of a large ditch.

Some of the harness pieces are unusually large for the period and inlaid with Mediterranean coral and coloured glass, suggesting sophisticated craftwork and long-distance trade networks.

The find was made in December 2021 by metal detectorist Peter Heads, who recognised the significance of the artefacts and immediately contacted Durham University archaeologists and the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Following advice from the British Museum, and with over £120,000 of grant support from Historic England, a team from Durham University excavated the site in 2022.

The artefacts were found in at least two separate deposits. In one, copper alloy bridle fittings were clustered with the iron tyres of horse-drawn vehicles. Many had clearly been deliberately damaged, including tyres, which were bent out of shape, and vessels placed upside down.

A second deposit, removed in a single block for laboratory excavation, contained bundled spears and decorated pony harnesses, again suggesting intentional deposition. Though no human remains were found, the burning and breaking of many items may indicate a symbolic destruction of wealth, possibly in a funerary context.



Left: One of the two mask-like human faces decorating the shoulder of the cauldron shown upside down as found during excavation

Professor Tom Moore, head of Archaeology at Durham, said: “The Melsonby Hoard is of a scale and size that is exceptional for Britain and probably even Europe. Unusually it includes lots of pieces of vehicles and items such as the wine mixing bowl which is decorated in both Mediterranean and Iron Age styles. Whoever originally owned the material in this hoard was probably a part of a network of elites across Britain, into Europe, and even the Roman world.”

Dr Sophia Adams, curator at the British Museum, added: “This is the largest single deposit of horse harness and vehicle parts excavated in Britain. It is significant not just for the quantity of objects buried together 2,000 years ago but also the quality and range of items. These finds shed new light on collections at the British Museum that were discovered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”

To support its recovery and preservation, the hoard was CT scanned at the University of Southampton’s μ -VIS X-Ray Imaging Centre, where cutting-edge technology helped identify the fragile artefacts and their placement in the ground before excavation. Conservation and analysis are ongoing at Durham, and researchers expect the assemblage to contribute major insights into Iron Age manufacturing, mobility, status, and identity.



Left: L-R Professor Tom Moore, head of the Department of Archaeology, Durham University; Dr Emily Williams, Department of Archaeology, Durham University; Dr Sophia Adams, curator, The British Museum; Dr Keith Emerick, inspector of ancient monuments, Historic England, with some of the artefacts which form the Melsonby Hoard

Duncan Wilson, chief executive of Historic England, said: “It sheds new light on Iron Age life in the north and Britain, but it also demonstrates connections with Europe. Its proximity to the great Iron Age enclosure at Stanwick is an important factor in understanding its significance.”

The hoard was officially declared Treasure in 2024 and has been valued at £254,000 by the Treasure Valuation Committee. The Yorkshire Museum has launched a fundraising campaign to acquire the collection and, if successful, plans to place the finds on public display.

Dr Andrew Woods, Senior Curator at the Yorkshire Museum, said: “We have the exciting opportunity to save the hoard for the nation and the people of Yorkshire. By acquiring the hoard we will be able to make it accessible to everyone and, working in partnership with others, we can learn more about this fascinating period, why the hoard was buried, how the objects may have been used and to cast light on to whom it may have belonged.” ■



Underwater excavation planned for medieval crannog in Scottish Highlands



Right: Loch Achilty from the Air



ANDY HICKIE

Below: A volunteer diver from the Nautical Archaeology Society inspects underwater timbers at Loch Achilty



DUNCAN ROSS

An underwater excavation of a medieval crannog is due to take place this September at Loch Achilty, around 20 miles to the northwest of Inverness. The project, led by the North of Scotland Archaeological Society (NOSAS) and the Nautical Archaeology Society, is supported by a grant from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

Found predominantly in Scotland and Ireland, crannogs are a type of artificial island dwelling constructed in lakes, bogs, and estuaries using timber, brush, and stone foundations. They are thought to have been first built during the Neolithic period in around 4000 BC and continued to be constructed into the seventeenth century.

Sampling of timbers previously recovered from Loch Achilty suggests the structure was in use between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, with dates ranging from 1046 to 1421.

Known crannogs from the medieval period are rare and therefore very few of them have been studied, making the site a particularly valuable opportunity for further archaeological investigation.

The excavation aims to investigate the chronology of the site and better understand how the crannog was built, used, and eventually abandoned. Volunteers will record surviving underwater features and recover

additional timbers for radiocarbon and dendrochronological analysis. Palaeoenvironmental samples will also be taken to help reconstruct the historic loch-side environment.

“Due to the incredible preservation of this type of material, crannogs store exceptional evidence for what the wider environment and climate was like,” said Dr Michael Stratigos FSAScot, University of Aberdeen.

“The information stored on crannogs represents a unique opportunity to offer a long-term perspective on our present situation and how people at different times have coped with climate change in the past.”

Richard Guest, project lead and amateur archaeologist with NOSAS, added: “Hopefully the excavation of more timbers will lead to more dates and therefore a sequence for how the crannog was used – more specific dates could help to provide the story of who built the crannog and who used it.” ■

The AMPHORA Project for those affected by the Ukraine War

A UK-devised toolkit which uses archaeology to support mental health and wellbeing is now helping soldiers and civilians in Ukraine to recover from the trauma of war.

The AMPHORA Project (Authentic and Meaningful Participation in Heritage Or Related Activities) was co-founded by Dr Paul Everill of the University of Winchester and Dr Karen Burnell of Southampton Solent University. Drawing on their combined experience in field archaeology and applied psychology, the pair developed the AMPHORA toolkit to support those designing and evaluating archaeology-focused wellbeing initiatives.

Prompted by a surge in public engagement with heritage projects for mental health purposes, AMPHORA offers a series of toolkits designed for project providers, social prescribers, and participants to support the delivery of therapeutic heritage-related activities. The project also helps ensure that wellbeing outcomes can be effectively assessed, shared, and improved.

Since its launch, AMPHORA has helped inform several UK programmes, including Operation Nightingale and Breaking Ground Heritage, which work with military veterans through archaeological fieldwork. Dr Everill's work has also extended to Georgia, where he has collaborated with British and Georgian veterans at the site of a Byzantine fortress at Nokalakevi.

Now the toolkit has found a new audience in Ukraine. A Ukrainian



initiative called Spiritual Recovery Through Culture, based at the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra National Reserve, has adopted AMPHORA as part of a programme that combines archaeology and heritage crafts to support the mental wellbeing of military personnel.

Dr Everill first learned of the initiative's use of AMPHORA during a 2023 conference at Bournemouth University on the theme of 'Archaeology for Recovery'. The event, co-organised by Professor Mark Brisbane and Operation Nightingale's Richard Osgood, brought together heritage professionals from around the world to share ideas on the intersection of archaeology and public health.

Dr Everill said: "It was wonderful to hear that the AMPHORA guidelines had supported the development of this initiative in Kyiv, and obviously Karen and I talked to Sergiy and his colleagues later that day. Since then we've been offering advice, and helping in whatever ways we can, including in the evaluation of their

results. It's a huge privilege to work with colleagues in Ukraine, and to support this important work."

The programme has since expanded into a nationwide scheme supported by the Ukrainian Association of Archaeologists (UAA), which has branches in 26 regions. The team is now working on a dedicated 'AMPHORA-Ukraine' manual adapted for use in Ukrainian contexts. Dr Sergiy Taranenko, who leads the Kyiv initiative, said: "Together with Karen and Paul, we plan to create a methodological manual 'AMPHORA-Ukraine', which will help in the rehabilitation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine for many years."

Looking ahead, the AMPHORA project will be the focus of a special session on 'Wellbeing Archaeology' at the upcoming World Archaeological Congress, convened by Dr Everill. The session will bring together international practitioners to explore how archaeology can deliver public benefit across a wide range of social and cultural settings. ■



DR PAUL EVERILL

Left: Dr Paul Everill (second left of front row) with participants in the Nokalakevi dig in Georgia

New techniques reveal the contents of sealed historic jars

A team of researchers from the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), the Natural History Museum in London, and Agilent Technologies has demonstrated a new method for analysing the chemical composition of preservation fluids in historic specimens – without opening their original containers.

The study, published in the scientific journal, *ACS Omega*, shows how Spatially Offset Raman Spectroscopy (SORS), a non-invasive laser-based technique, can detect and distinguish between substances inside sealed glass jars.

Originally developed at STFC's Central Laser Facility and now widely used in airport scanners, SORS analyses changes in light wavelengths to identify chemical components. The findings confirm that SORS can identify the dominant chemicals present in historic preservation fluids and even detect concentration differences within a single fluid type – offering curators and conservators a powerful new diagnostic tool.

Sara Mosca, scientist at STFC, said: "It's been a privilege to contribute to this innovative research, applying SORS

expertise to help uncover a valuable new application for this technology within the heritage science community."

Chelsea McKibbin, senior conservator at London's Natural History Museum, added: "After many years of seeking an appropriate analytical approach, it is exciting to be part of this enthusiastic project. Applying this technique in practise to historic fluid preserved collections where minimal intervention is paramount, will not only be invaluable to collection knowledge, but also inform future care considerations." ■



Ice Age art to go on display in West Yorkshire this summer

Some of the oldest surviving works of portable art ever discovered in Europe, including the earliest known example of figurative art from Britain, will go on display in West Yorkshire this summer as part of a new exhibition.

Ice Age Art Now, a partnership between the British Museum, Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture, and Bradford District Museums and Galleries, will open at the Cliffe Castle Museum in Keighley on 21 June.

It will feature over 75 rare objects from the British Museum's collection, including stone and bone engravings created between 24,000 and 12,000 years ago by some of the earliest makers of portable art in Europe.

Among the highlights is an engraved rib bone from Creswell Crags,



Top: Engraved bone pendant depicting a wolverine found at Grotte des Eyzies, Dordogne, France, 13,000 to 12,000 years old

Above: Swimming reindeer sculpted from mammoth ivory, found at Montastruc, Midi Pyrénées, France, about 13,500 years old



Above: Engraved drawing of a horse on bone, found at Creswell Crags, Derbyshire, England, about 13,500 years old



Two reindeer drawn on bone, found at La Madeleine, Dordogne, France, about 13,500 years old

Derbyshire, dating to around 13,500 years ago. Depicting a horse with forcefully incised lines, it is the oldest known figurative artwork from Britain.

Other featured items include two reindeer engraved on bone and coloured with red ochre from La Madeleine in France, and a finely engraved wolverine pendant from the Dordogne.

"This exhibition will not only feature some of the rarest surviving examples of Ice Age art, but some of the oldest known works of art from the UK, demonstrating the social value of artistic expression throughout the ages," said Nicholas Cullinan, director of the British Museum.

Visitors will also encounter an immersive cave-inspired installation and a family-friendly trail linking the exhibition with Cliffe Castle's permanent displays on natural history and archaeology. ■

Ice Age Art Now runs from 21 June to 14 September 2025 and is part of the programme for Bradford's year as UK City of Culture

Gateways into Heritage

Members of the CBA's Youth Advisory Board recently attended the Gateways Into Heritage event hosted by English Heritage. Eva and Ihini reflect on the event and how it might shape future CBA delivery

Eva

This February, a few of us from the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) made our way to the Yorkshire Museum to attend the Gateways Into Heritage event.

Organised by English Heritage's Shout Out Loud team, the event brought together young people from across the UK who are actively involved in reshaping how heritage is understood, represented, and experienced.

Unlike many heritage spaces I've encountered, which often talk about young people rather than meaningfully involving us, this event felt genuinely inclusive and refreshing.

It didn't just pay lip service to youth engagement; it placed young voices and ideas at the centre. From the outset, the focus was on what heritage looks and feels like to diverse, younger audiences, and how we can break down the traditional barriers that have made it feel exclusionary.

One of our Youth Advisory Board members, George Knight, took to the stage to deliver a lightning presentation during the conference. In just a few minutes, he clearly and confidently communicated the mission of our Youth Advisory Board, the values we stand for, and most excitingly, offered a preview of our upcoming flagship project.

Ihini

Embodying the youth-led theme, a team of Shout Out Loud Young Producers and I co-created a workshop exploring personal aspects of heritage for the event. We began with an activity mapping objects to their locations – while scattered across England, these objects were carefully curated by us to encourage participants to think differently.

From the Ladies of Llangollen as symbols of female autonomy in Georgian England, to Kentish Anglo-Saxon gold brooches inlaid with dark-red garnets sourced from Sri Lanka, we wanted to capture how diverse our past is, shaped by global networks and often-overlooked voices.

We then asked the participants to



CBA [2]



Above: Ihini delivering a workshop at the Gateways into Heritage event, which explored how diverse our past is, shaped by global networks and often-overlooked voices

Left: YAB members with CBA's Delivery and Engagement manager. The event was powerful reminder of how much energy and creativity there is when young people are given space to lead

output for wider accessibility. Aimed at young people aged 16-21, we hope to reach those from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds.

We expect to host panels featuring young archaeologists and those in non-traditional roles, alongside workshops and activities blending practical skills, creativity, and wellbeing to offer an engaging and inclusive introduction to the sector. Our aim is to create a supportive space for youth to spark curiosity, gain experience, and explore varied possibilities within the sector.

Final thoughts

The Gateways Into Heritage event was not only a chance to celebrate youth-led work within the sector but also a powerful reminder of how much energy and creativity there is when young people are given space to lead.

It left us all feeling more connected, inspired, and committed to building a future for heritage that is inclusive, accessible, and shaped by many different voices. ■

cba blog



The world in antiquity

Summaries
Dr Alison
Edwards



Top: Map showing the location of Flagstones within the wider Dorchester area; other Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments and settlement evidence in the area are also shown

Right: Location of circular ditched enclosures associated with Middle Neolithic cremations included in the chronological comparison

Below: Plan of the excavated, western half of the Flagstones enclosure (after Smith, Healy, Allen, Morris, Barnes and Woodward 1997: fig. 22

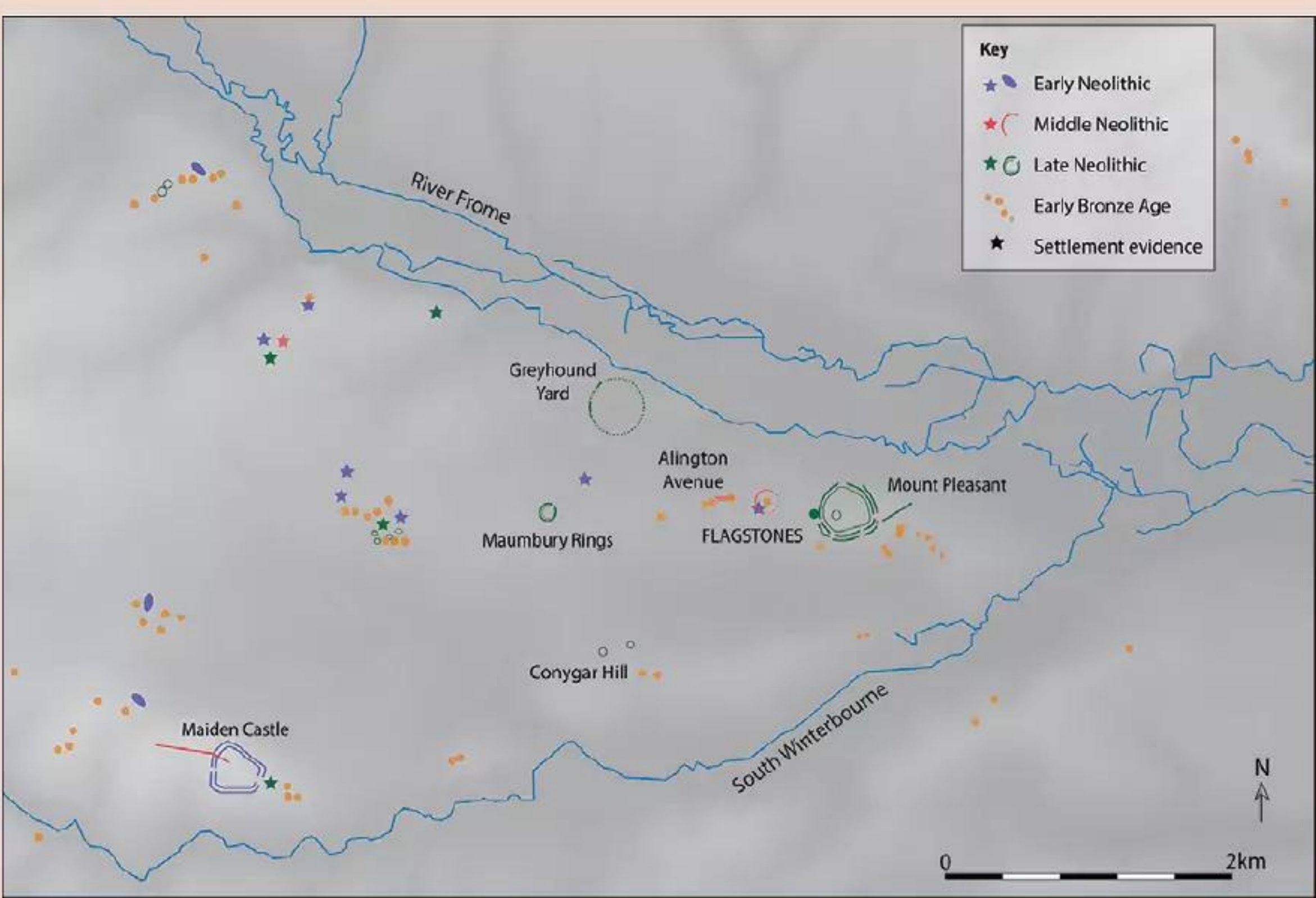
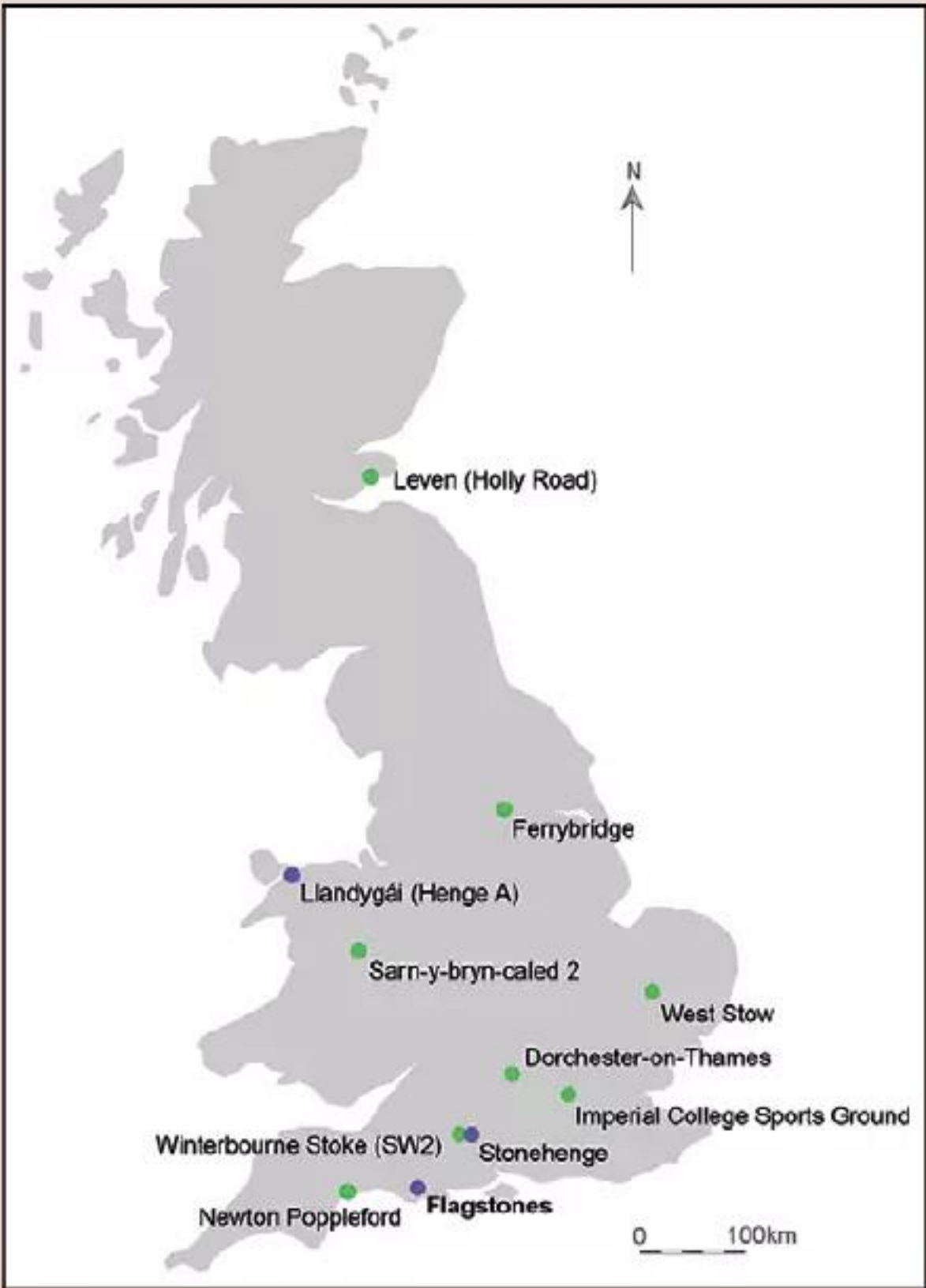
Huge circular monuments, including henges, began appearing in Britain in the Middle Neolithic (c.3400-2800 BC). Prior to this, most monuments were rectangular or linear, such as long barrows or cursus monuments. Key to understanding this transformation is a small group of monuments termed ‘proto-henges’.

Typically, these monuments are circular, measure 80-110m in diameter, and consist of a ditch flanked by either two banks or just an inner bank and crossed by narrow entrances. All of those excavated so far were used for the interment of the dead (usually cremations, but also inhumations) yet contain relatively little other material, such as pottery or flint artefacts.

They were built at a time when relatively few large-scale monuments were constructed, in comparison to the earlier and later Neolithic. The chronology of these proto-henges is therefore essential to understanding the trajectories of changing ceremonial and funeral monuments in Britain.

Three similar monuments form key comparators: Flagstones in Dorset; the earliest phase of Stonehenge in Wiltshire; and Llandygái ‘Henge’ A in Gwynedd, all of which have been partially excavated. The enclosure at Stonehenge has been precisely dated and there are radiocarbon dates available on cremation burials from Llandygái, but not many dates were available for Flagstones.

New radiocarbon dating and Bayesian modelling was done on samples excavated during the 1986-1987 investigation at Flagstones, including deer antlers, human bone, and charcoal. Flagstones can now be placed within the ‘timescape’ of the wider complex of prehistoric monuments around Dorchester.



The earliest construction in the area was the causewayed enclosure at Maiden Castle, and several large and complex monuments, including Mount Pleasant henge, were constructed towards the end of the Late Neolithic, in the centuries either side of 2500 BC. The Flagstones enclosure was constructed far closer in time to Early Neolithic monuments than to the henge.

The construction of Flagstones enclosure and its associated funerary activity, now dated to the thirty-third or thirty-second centuries (cal) BC, can be placed at the end of a sequence of earlier Neolithic activity in the Dorchester complex.

Comparison of the dating available from Stonehenge, Llandygái, and Flagstones shows that both the construction of the enclosure at Flagstones and the funerary activity there took place earlier than the same activities at Stonehenge.

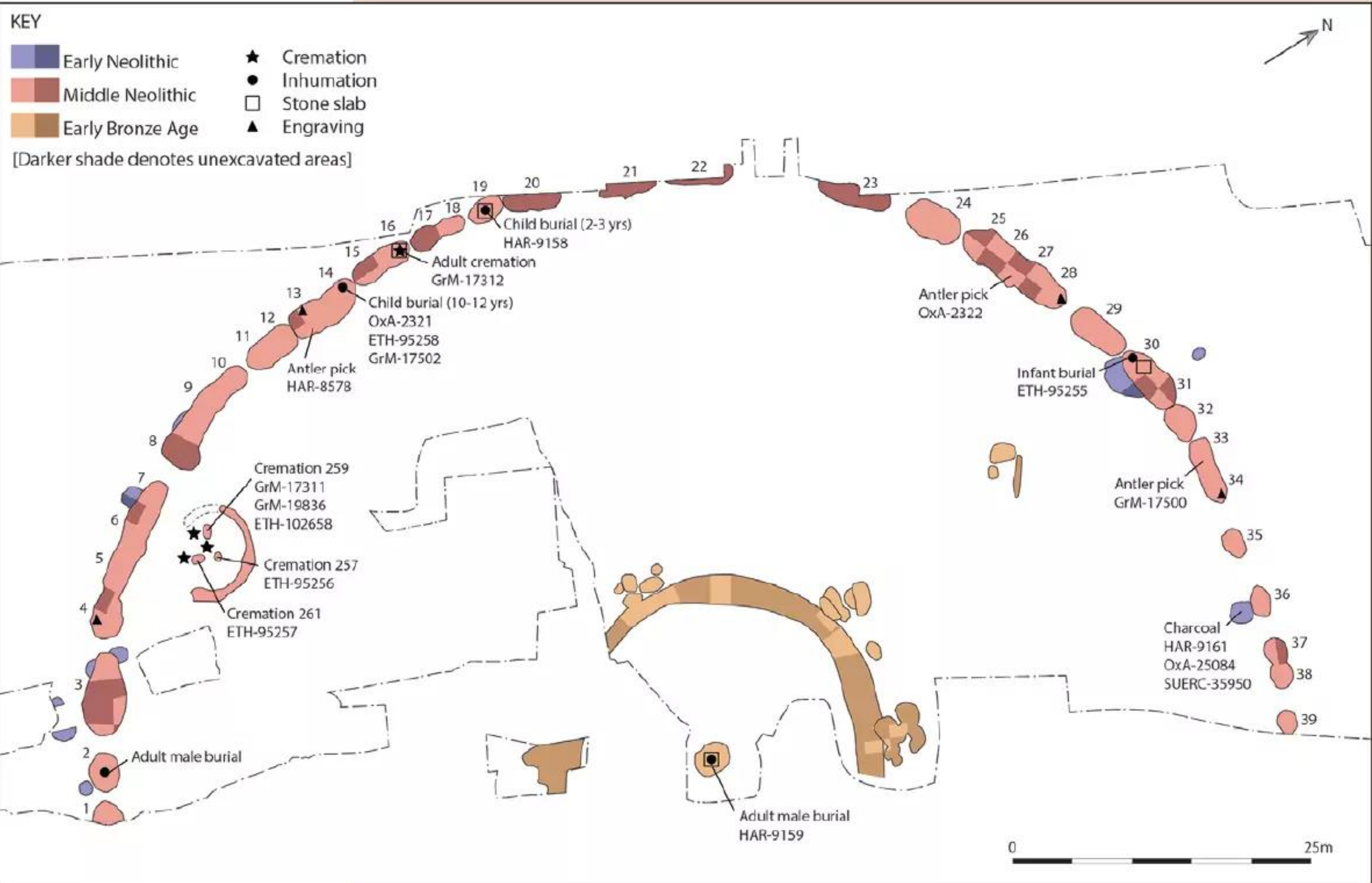
Flagstones is the earliest large circular enclosure to be precisely dated, pre-dating Stones of Stenness, Orkney, though a number of similar monuments do not have radiocarbon dates available. As a new style of monument, Flagstones acted as an anchor within the development of the Dorchester complex and its form may have been directly replicated at Stonehenge.

The large and perfectly circular form of the earthwork enclosure and the interment of an adult cremation burial were the innovative aspects of this monument. The cremated remains of an adult alongside inhumations of children at Flagstones may represent an early phase of the transition to cremation funerary rites.

The revised chronology presented here shows that Flagstones was contemporaneous with the construction and funerary use of developed passage tombs in the Boyne Valley, such as Knowth and Newgrange. The new construction style may indicate connections between eastern Ireland and southern England at this period. Connections to this region are underlined by the presence of curvilinear engravings on the vertical chalk sides of some of the pits at Flagstones.

The people who constructed Flagstones created an innovative large circular monument, with funerary practices, art, and artefacts that suggest long-distance connections, most strongly to Ireland.

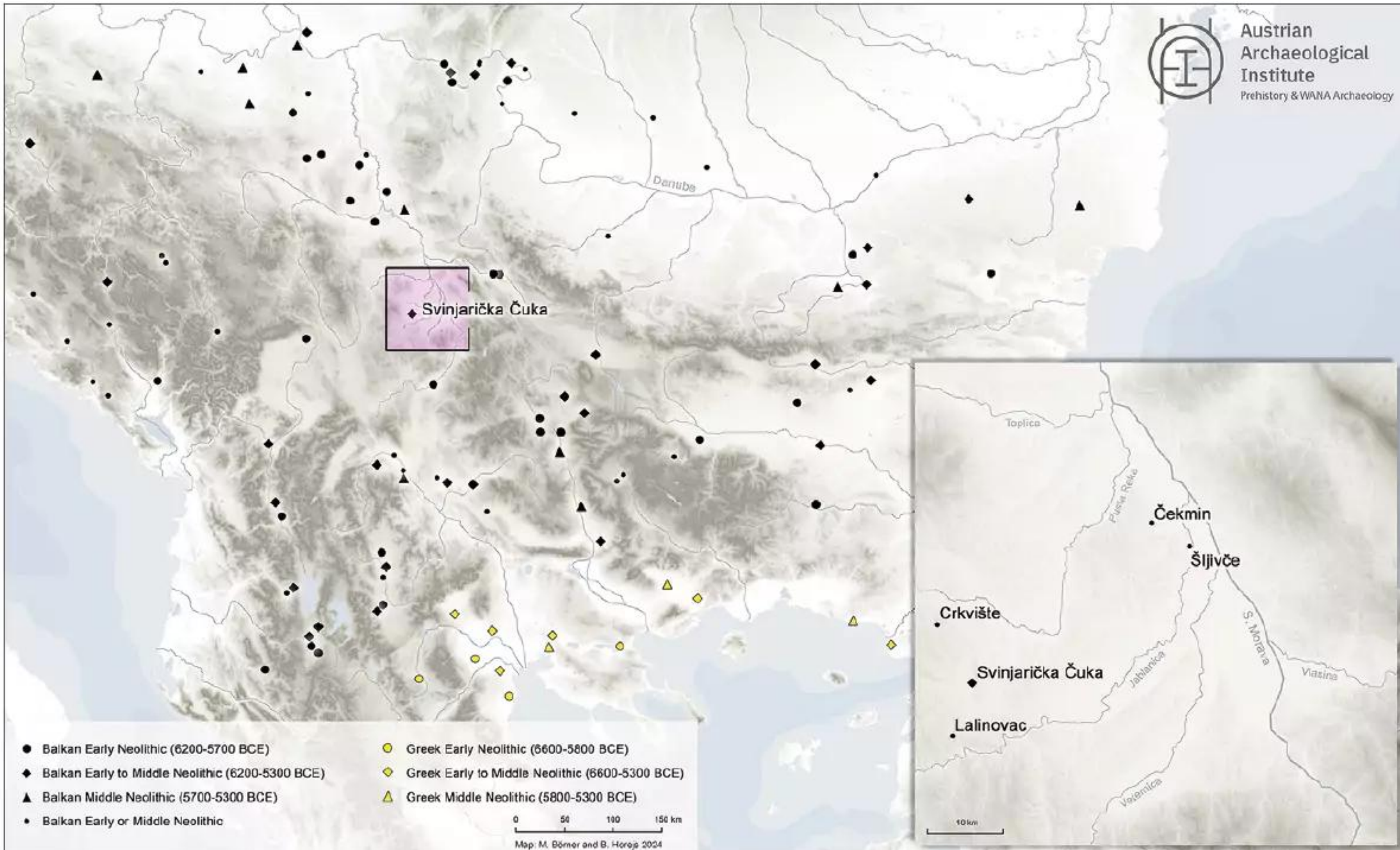
“Beginning of the circle? Revised chronologies for Flagstones and Alington Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset” Susan Greaney (University of Exeter) et. al





The Vardar-Morava River corridor, a potential dispersal route of early farmers into Europe, has been surveyed for new evidence of the initial Neolithic and several new sites were detected in southern Serbia.

Svinjarička Čuka has been excavated since 2018. The location, on a small river terrace in the resource-rich hinterland of the Morava River Valley, provides the ideal conditions for agriculture and access to diverse raw materials. Fieldwork and radiocarbon dating indicate six phases of occupation in the

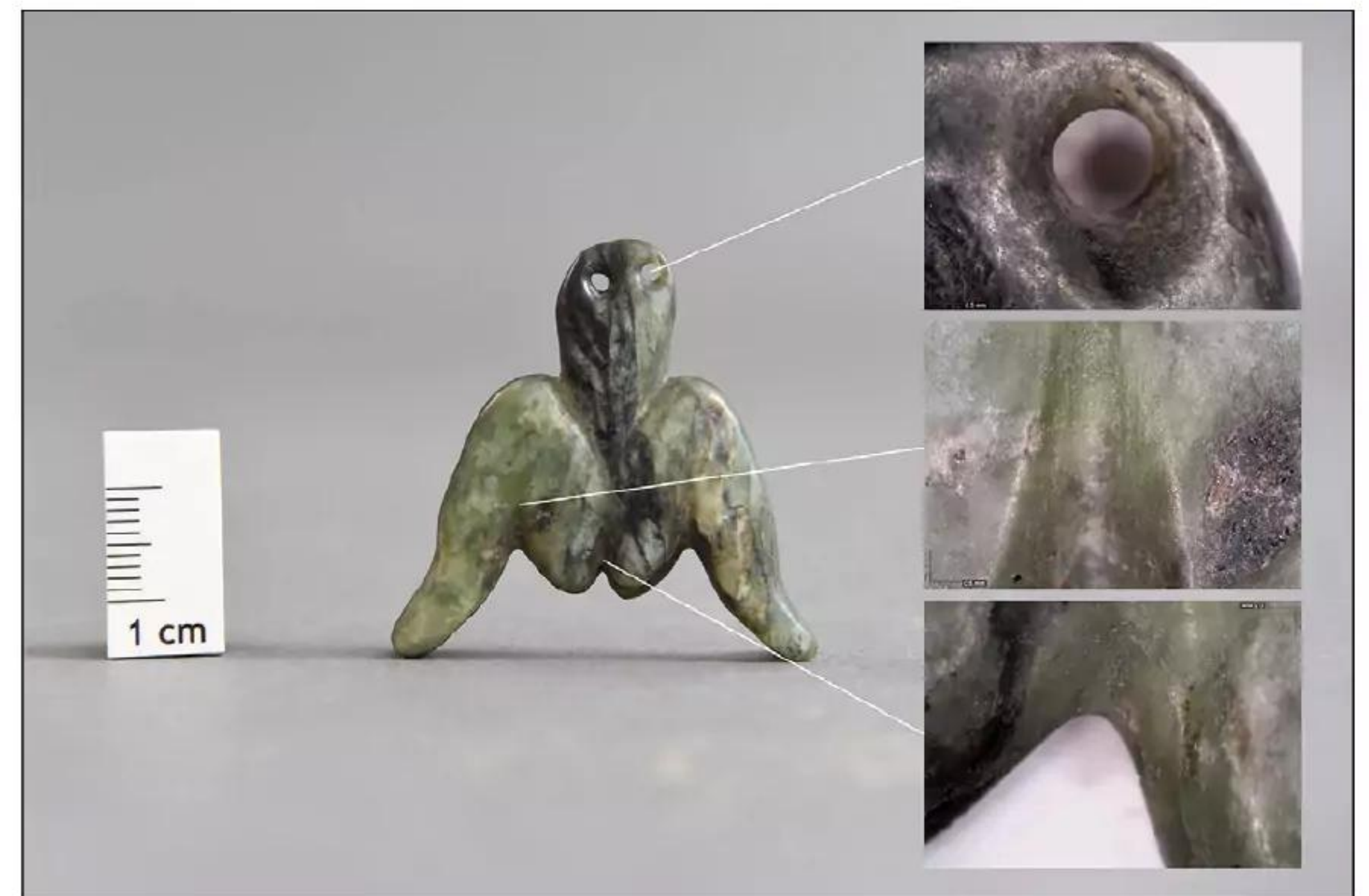


Above: Early and Middle Neolithic sites in southeast Europe with detail of the survey region

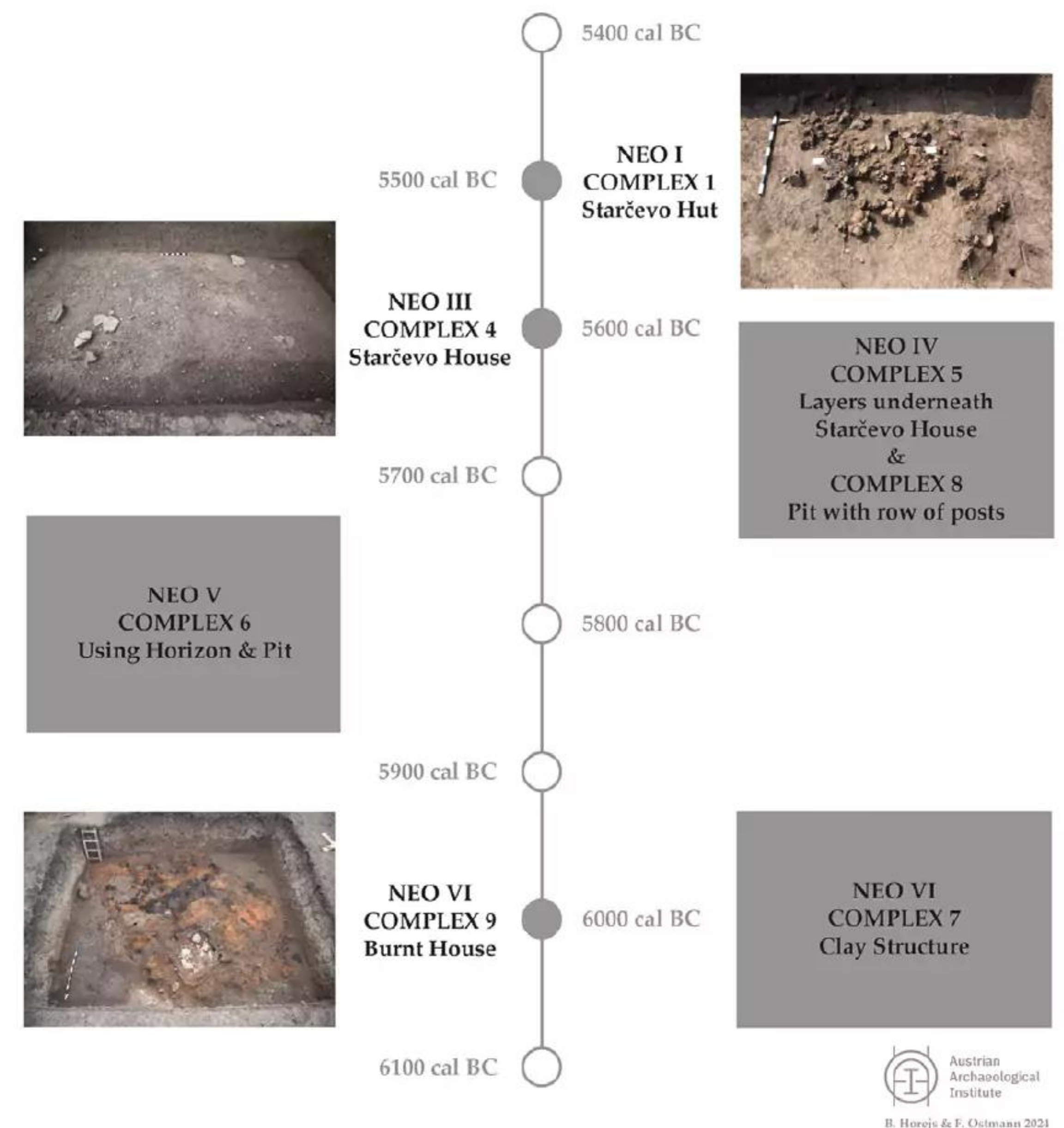
Top right: Nephrite pendant with macroscopic details showing use-wear traces

Early and Middle Neolithic (c.6100-5500 BC). The terrace was then reoccupied during the fourth millennium BC, used as a burial ground in the third millennium BC, and occupied again in the second and first millennia BC.

The majority of the approximately 30 investigated Early to Middle Neolithic sites in the central Balkans were not occupied over a long period and comprise predominantly dug-in structures. This contributes to a picture of temporarily sedentary and seasonally mobile first farmers in this region, contrasting with Neolithic household societies in the Aegean and Anatoli.



Neolithic occupation phases at Svinjarička Čuka



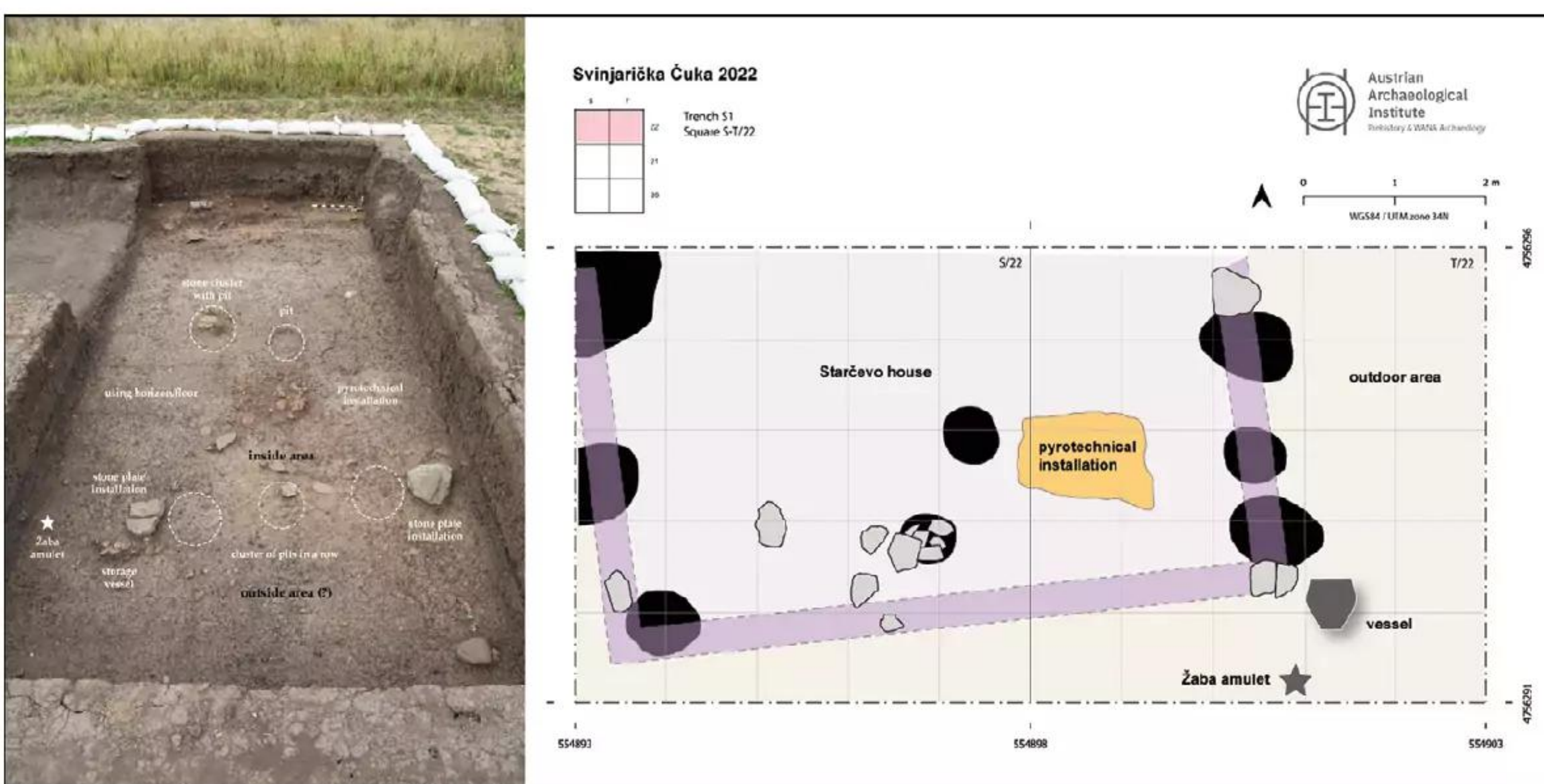
Above: Neolithic occupation phases of Svinjarička Čuka with radiocarbon dates and selected house features

A stone pendant was found at the site which represents a female figure giving birth. The stone is nephrite, possibly sourced from southern Bulgaria. Stylistically comparable figures made of marble, black stone, or clay are known from Neolithic sites in Greece, Turkey, North Macedonia, and Bulgaria, indicating a widely shared practice and understanding of this distinct symbolic imagery.

The only early Bronze Age burial found at the site so far is currently being studied. The burial and grave goods have some unique features: The body was placed in a contracted east-west oriented position within a large rectangular stone cist. A hair ring and spring wire made of gold were found near the skull and more than 30 gold beads were recovered from around the chest. This demonstrates cultural links with the Lower Danube burials of the first half of the third millennium BC.

The excavations at Svinjarička Čuka shed new light on the first farmers of the region in the context of Neolithic dispersal from southwest Asia into Europe, and on the complex mix of mobile pioneers and regional adaptation characterising this period.

"Fresh light on Balkan prehistory: highlights from Svinjarička Čuka (Serbia)" by Barbara Horejs (Austrian Archaeological Institute / University of Vienna) et al.



Above: Schematic plan of the Starčevo house of phase NEO III with the location of the nephrite pendant 'Žaba amulet'

The evidence from Svinjarička Čuka challenges this model for the central Balkans; a variety of domestic structures are present, including solid houses built using a combination of wattle-and-daub, stone slabs, and wooden posts. Features such as hearths, pits and storage facilities, and renewed floors indicate long-term and permanent use. The houses reveal various domestic activities, such as textile and tool production, and food production.



Right: Map of Bornholm (A) showing the location of Store Frigård and other cemeteries from the Early Iron Age. B and C show a 3D map and plan of the cemetery, respectively

Right: Grave furnishings and reconstruction of supposed costumes. A) grave 93: iron brooches, belt hook; B) grave 158: iron knife, copper-alloy brooch, glass and gold beads

Below: Finds from grave 94 and a possible belt reconstruction (8). With the exception of the glass bead (3), all the artefacts are made of iron

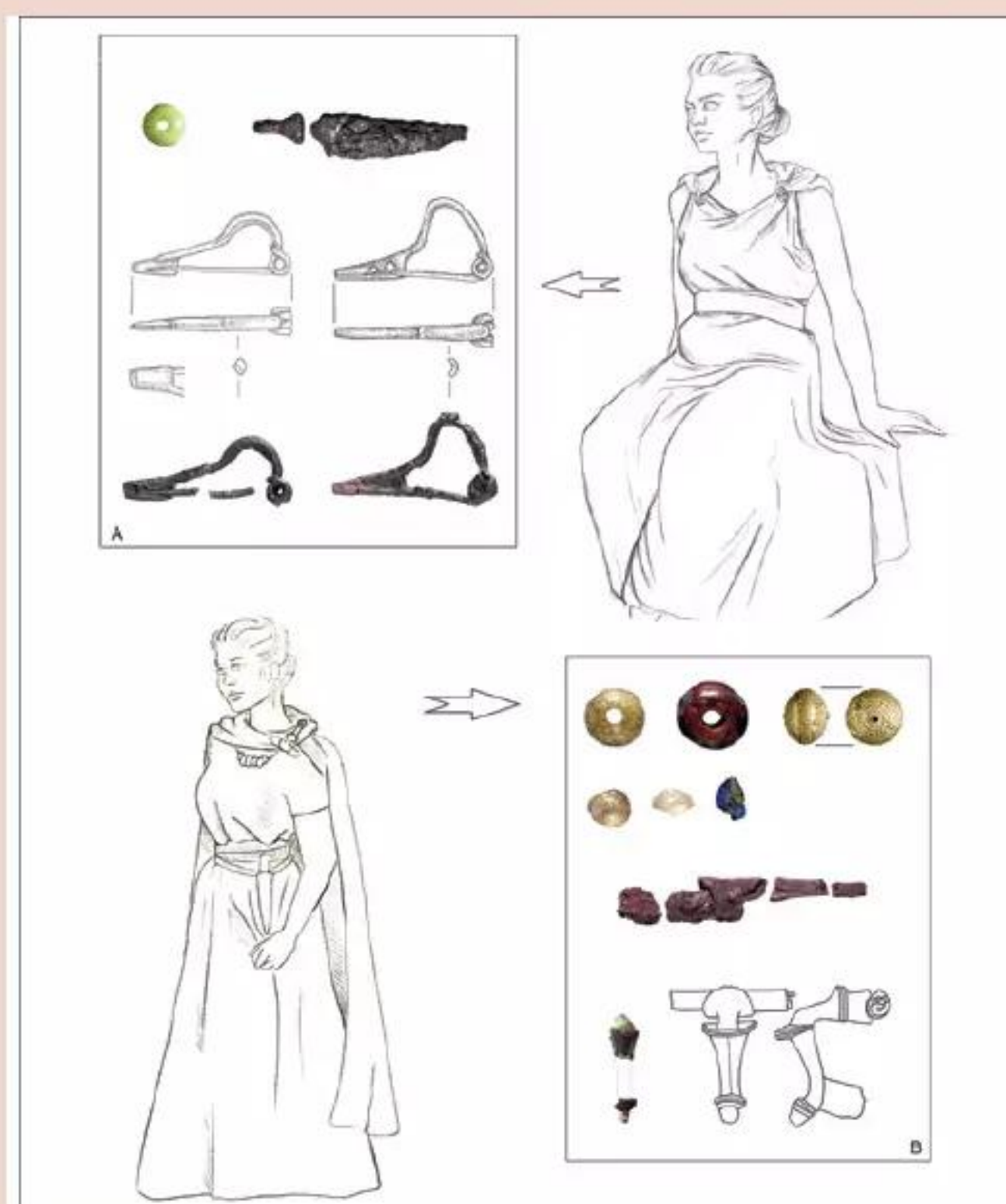
The central location of Bornholm Island in the Baltic Sea makes it an obvious nexus for exchange, mobility, and intercultural contact between continental Europe (Poland and northern Germany) and Jutland and southern Scandinavia (including Öland and Gotland).

The international interdisciplinary research project ‘Bornholm – the island in the middle’, which brings together researchers from Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Norway, aims to shed light on social and economic transformations of the local community, and on contacts and alliance systems in the Baltic Sea region in the Early Iron Age, based on material from Store Frigård.

The cemetery at Store Frigård was excavated 1954–1963 and stored in the National Museum in Copenhagen. The 1,256 cremation (and one inhumation) graves, dating from the early pre-Roman Iron Age to the late Roman period (500 BC–AD 400), make Store Frigård the largest and longest-functioning cemetery in the entire Baltic area.

The spatial distribution and chronology of burials indicate that the cemetery developed in three groupings concentrated around three highly visible ridges in the local landscape. Iron finds include ‘Scandinavian belts’, with decorative, multi-part iron fittings, present across southern Scandinavia in the late pre-Roman Iron Age and early Roman period. Grave inventories and anthropological analyses indicate that these were elements of women’s clothing. Typological analysis suggests that the fitting sets from Store Frigård originate from Gotland or mainland Sweden.

Far-reaching intercultural contacts are also reflected in the unprecedented number of brooches in Scandinavia with a triangular bow or a curved bow (so-



called “geschweifte” brooches), typical mainly of central and northern Poland and Germany in the late pre-Roman Iron Age.

Regarding weaponry, the same types of spearheads, shields, and swords were used on Bornholm, on Öland, in Gotland, and in southern Scandinavia.

The presence of foreign clothing elements can be interpreted as an indication of the diffusion of cultural patterns, exchange and/or trade, and the mobility of people (including artisans). Similarities in weaponry may also indicate

the existence of large networks and military alliances.

The large number of iron objects from Store Frigård (more than 600) permits metallographic research into provenance and technology, to examine whether the island had the raw materials, local craftsmen, and know-how to be self-sufficient, or whether the community was dependent on imports.

Further research, including stable isotope analysis of bones, analysis of pottery samples, and analysis of metal and glass finds will provide an insight into almost a millennium of the history of Bornholm and the Baltic Sea area, its dynamics and the changing relationships and alliances between Iron Age societies.

Store Frigård, with its centuries of continuous use, is one of the few places on Bornholm and the Baltic Sea that so clearly illustrate trans-regional connections and human mobility.

“Cemetery at Store Frigård, Bornholm: society, exchange and alliance systems in the Baltic area at Early Iron Age” by Tine Trolle (Bornholms Museum / Aarhus University) et. al





Rock art in Australia dates back at least 30,000 years. Indigenous Australian art relies on motifs and figures to visually symbolise a traditional story, myth, and/or ritual. Archaeologically, the best-known form of non-sculptural Indigenous art in Australia is rock art created by the use of pigments and pecking, or abrading. Non-sculptural art was traditionally also produced on bark, wooden implements, and human bodies.

Today, contemporary art continues to be created on these same mediums, as well as on canvas, cloth, and pottery. These forms convey the details of a story that typically involves individuals, animals, and a journey wherein spiritual elements are encountered. In contrast, the digital tracings or 'finger flutings' which are found impressed into soft cave surfaces are not typically considered visually symbolic expressions. Walshe and Nowell suggest that these imprints may represent a dynamic, indigenous, performative tradition, based on anthropological research.

Koonalda Cave is located on the southern margin of the Nullarbor Plain, which is the largest arid karst system in the world. It is one of numerous caves across southern Australia that contain engravings (digital tracings and incisions), but it remains exceptional due to the breadth of display and state of preservation of the digital tracings, in particular.

Sinuuous, wavy lines, made by fingers on the soft carbonate surfaces and by sharp objects cutting into the harder surfaces, are the only motifs recorded in Koonalda Cave. This highly repetitive form is without notable variation across some 300m² of wall surface, resulting in a stunning array of lines with a concomitant absence of other motifs.

Sand drawings are a form of cultural symbolism used particularly by central desert communities to emphatically relate a story, using recurring motifs to illustrate the story as it is told. The tradition is continued by indigenous people today. Repetition is seemingly paramount in Indigenous Australian



Koonalda Cave wall section with digital tracings

WALSHE, NOWELL



Above: Child creating a sand drawing, Northern Territory, Australia, 1957

GILBERT JOYCE; IMAGE COURTESY LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES NORTHERN TERRITORY

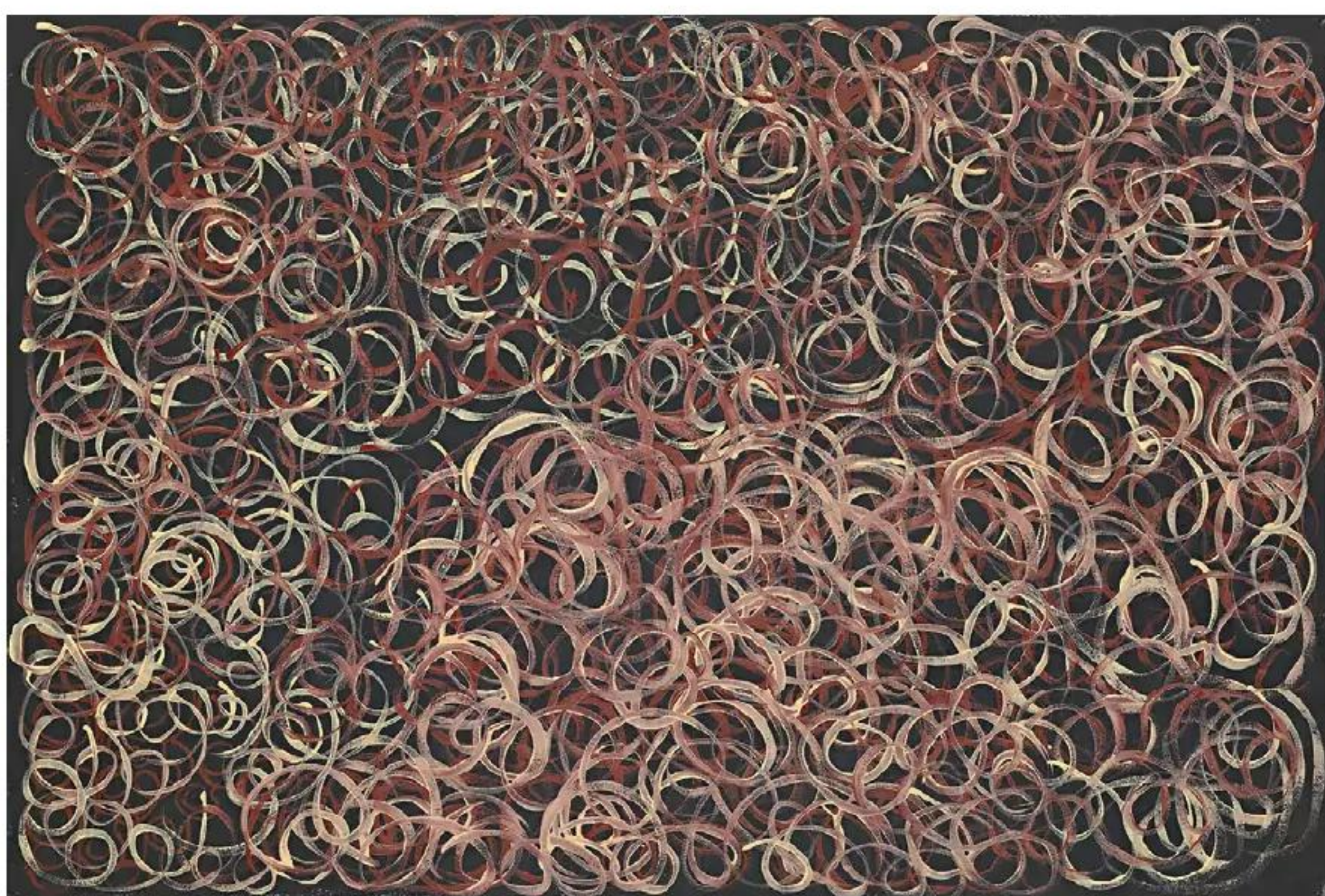
art; very few motifs or lines are employed but each may hold multiple meanings, depending on the artist and context. Thus, a motif holds little to no meaning when disassociated from performative behaviour.

In the environmentally stable confines of Koonalda Cave, protected from wind, sun, and rain, and from gross physical movement, digital tracings have remained intact across many thousands of years, and across these millennia there have been additions and overlay rather than erasures. This suggests deliberation in their creation and deliberation in leaving them be.

Koonalda Cave displays a vast expanse of wavy lines made by human fingers or a hand-held object and this strongly suggests performative art for propagation – the maintenance of a vital item (food, raw material, or both). Whether this item was identical across the 30,000 years, or so, of indigenous engagement with Koonalda Cave is yet to be tested.

It is clear that digital tracings must be understood as more than proto-language, proto-art, or idiosyncratic acts by lone operators. They arise from ritualised acts of propagation, to ensure the seasonal return of a prized food and/or trade item, repeated over millennia.

"Rising up: digital traces and performative Indigenous culture in Australian rock art" by Keryn Walshe (University of Auckland) & April Nowell (University of Victoria, Canada)



Top: Arnkerrth (Mountain devil lizard Dreaming), canvas painting by Gloria Pitjara/Petyarr, c.1997

Above: Amwerlarr anganenty (Bigyam Dreaming), canvas painting by E. Kam Ngwarray, c.1995

THE ARTIST/LICENCED BY ABORIGINAL ARTISTS AGENCY; NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE

EMILY KAM KNGWARRAY/LICENCED BY COPYRIGHT AGENCY, AUSTRALIA; NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE

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Theatres of resistance:

Buried stories and Black radicalism at London's earliest playhouse and taverns



Since 2015, Archaeology South-East, part of the UCL Institute of Archaeology, has been working on a site at Stepney Way in Whitechapel, East London, funded through the developer Mount Anvil, in partnership with L&Q Housing. Sarah Wolferstan, Mercedes Baptiste Halliday, and a team of community researchers have been charting the evolution of these spaces from places of entertainment to their later emergence as centres of Black radicalism in London's East End.

Everyone thought that modern structures on site had destroyed the archaeological layers, but instead the site went from the evaluation phase to full mitigation and finally excavation.

Over several years, seventy plus archaeologists excavated over 7,000m² of soil, putting in more than 80,000 person hours on site.

During the post-excavation phase, over 40 different specialists have been involved and 1.76 tonnes of finds investigated: 685kg of pottery, 389kg of ceramic building material, 271kg of animal bone, 125kg of glass, and 62kg of clay tobacco pipe. The links to London's history were even more impressive than these numbers.

Whitechapel through the ages

Just outside the City of London and alongside the Great Essex Road is the main route east into London, enticing visitors and inhabitants this area has been 'global' since records began, and people have lived in this valley for several thousand years.

Prehistoric to medieval

Despite the fact that no prehistoric finds had been previously identified in the vicinity and the closest known prehistoric settlement was located some 3km to the northeast at the Olympic Park in the Lower Lea Valley, there were some very early discoveries on site, including worked flint dating from the Mesolithic to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.

We excavated roughly one quarter of an oval enclosed settlement, the first securely dated occupation layers suggesting that people lived here during the Middle Iron Age (c. 400–200 BC).

Nearby, we found a linear ditch with an ankle-breaker style slot at the base, a typical Roman technique designed to entrap and trip any invaders. It was located about 140m south of the projected line of the London to Colchester Roman road, and served as the main route into London from the east.

In the medieval period the site lay in the ancient manor of Stepney, whose lord had been the bishop of London since Saxon times. Over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, parts of this large manor developed into separate estates. Within a robber cut, we found the remains of a large stone constructed building, possibly the



Above: Archaeologists on site excavating the stage of the Red Lion Playhouse

Opposite page: Lead archaeologist Stephen White introducing the site: he is standing within a recreation of the playhouse's layout outlined in differential paving, and is leaning against a monolith marking the height of the stage, some of the various features incorporated into the landscaping of the development

remnants of a large manor house with pathways to the north, a yard, and farmland across the southern two-thirds of site.

Post-medieval: A lost playhouse

It was during the early post-medieval period that things got more complex, with buildings, levelling deposits, postholes, ditches, beam slots, quarry pits, and a large timber structure found on site. The busiest areas were to the northeast and to the northwest and included various buildings with yards on the northern edge with fields to the south.

Historic evidence indicates that the building to the northeast was the farm or house known as the 'Red Lion'. The building went through as many as four phases of rebuilding during the 150-year span (1550–1700), staying active from the mid-1500s through to the mid-1800s.

The group of buildings in the northwest may be the early iterations of a building referred to in later documents as the 'Gardener's house' and associated yards.

Theatre historians first shed light on the existence of a lost sixteenth-century playhouse, probably London's first purpose-built theatre, in 1923, when Edmund Chambers demonstrated that the Red Lion playhouse was referred to

in a dispute of 1567 between a client, John Brayne, and a carpenter, William Sylvester, a dispute which was adjudicated by the internal court of the Carpenters' Company.

In 1981, Janet Loengard discovered a second and fuller documentary source in a legal case in the Court of the King's Bench in 1569 involving the same client, John Brayne, and a second carpenter working at the site, John Raynolds.

This second document showed that William Sylvester was working on the scaffold for the spectators while Raynolds built the stage and a tower.

The documents refer to the 'playhouse at the sign of the Red Lion', describe the layout of the structure and its dimensions (30 by 40 feet), and even talk about a play that was performed there; 'the story of Sampson', a biblical tragedy which was performed there in mid-July 1567.

The fact that the first law dispute was in 1567 and describes that the playhouse had been commissioned that year proves that the structure went up very quickly. Brayne, originally a grocer, and his wife Margaret, had decided to invest in the burgeoning world of sixteenth century entertainment. In partnership with others, including Burbage, they then went on to build 'The Theatre' and 'The Curtain' in Shoreditch.

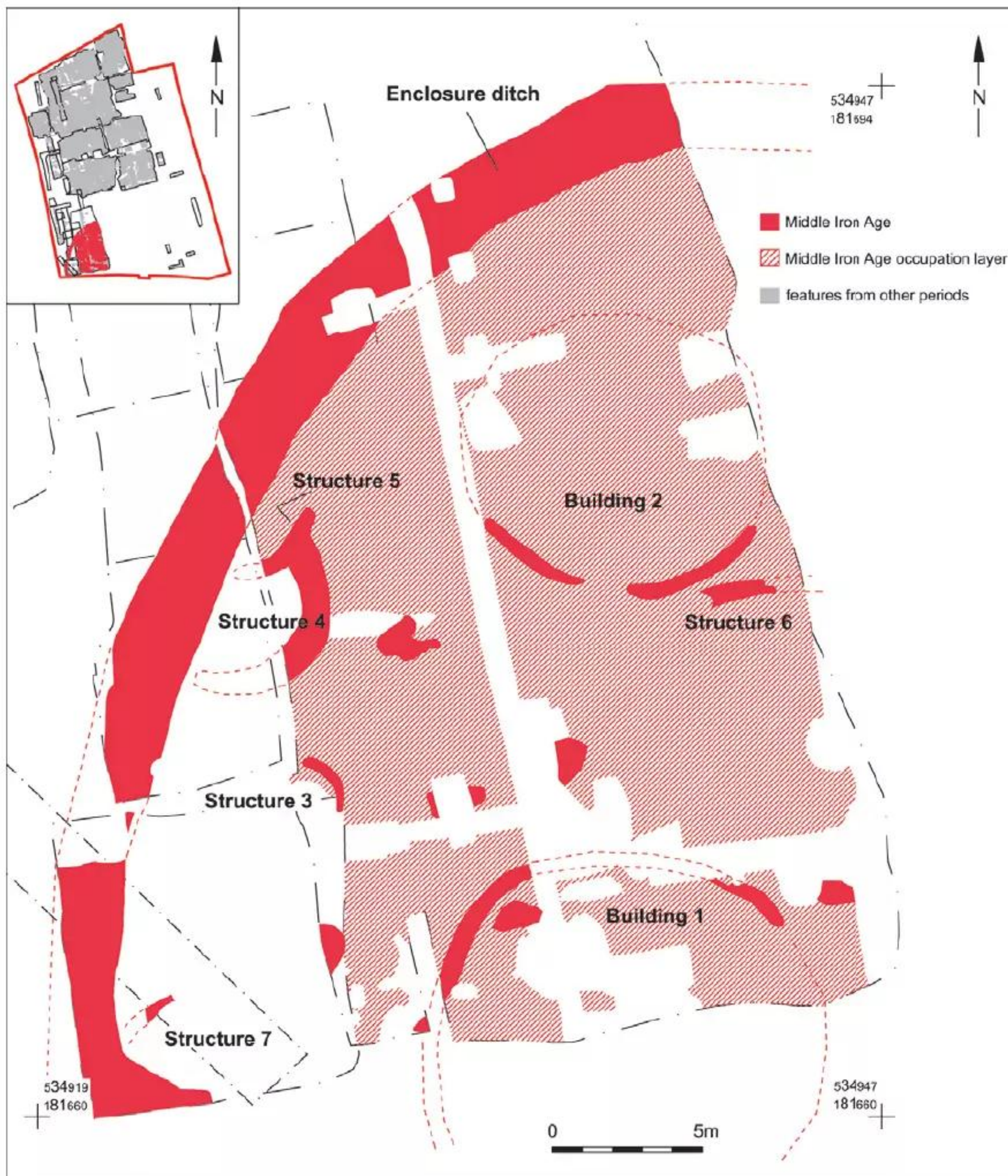
Imagine the thrill when the ASE team found a large post-built superstructure with 144 surviving timbers sat within a construction cut measuring 12.27m north-to-south by 9.27m east-to-west; its dimensions matched those in the 1569 lawsuit remarkably well.

A reconstruction (see page 21) based on the plans of the site show that the stage sat at the eastern end of the buildings and at the western end sat the galleries or “scaffolds” as they were referred to in the legal documents.

Right: Middle Iron Age enclosure photographed from above

Below: Middle Iron Age enclosure in plan

Bottom: The medieval wall of Stepney Manor in situ



The playhouse was entered from the west, underneath the galleries. There were walls to the north and south, forming a rectangular enclosed space.

Dating evidence from the western galleries of the superstructure indicates that they were standing until at least 1580. Large quantities of pine used in this early part of the structure were imported rather than local and the limited evidence for woodworking technology, use of simple joints, and the seemingly haphazard use and placement of many upright posts of varying sizes all suggest the structure was built rapidly and somewhat expediently.

Playhouses and theatres began to spring up in western Europe in the sixteenth century. Some reused existing spaces, others were constructed anew and free standing; the Red Lion is the first of these in England. There are similar examples in France and Spain built during the latter 1500s, most (if not all) of

which were rectangular in footprint. They were generally located in transitional spaces, along routes or thoroughfares that were frequently travelled, and were economically viable enterprises.

Callan Davies argues in his recent book that they were a venue for ‘playing’: sports, music, drinking, animal sports, and performances; combat displays such as fencing or wrestling; or an early version of stand-up or ‘improv’, known as ‘extemporising’.

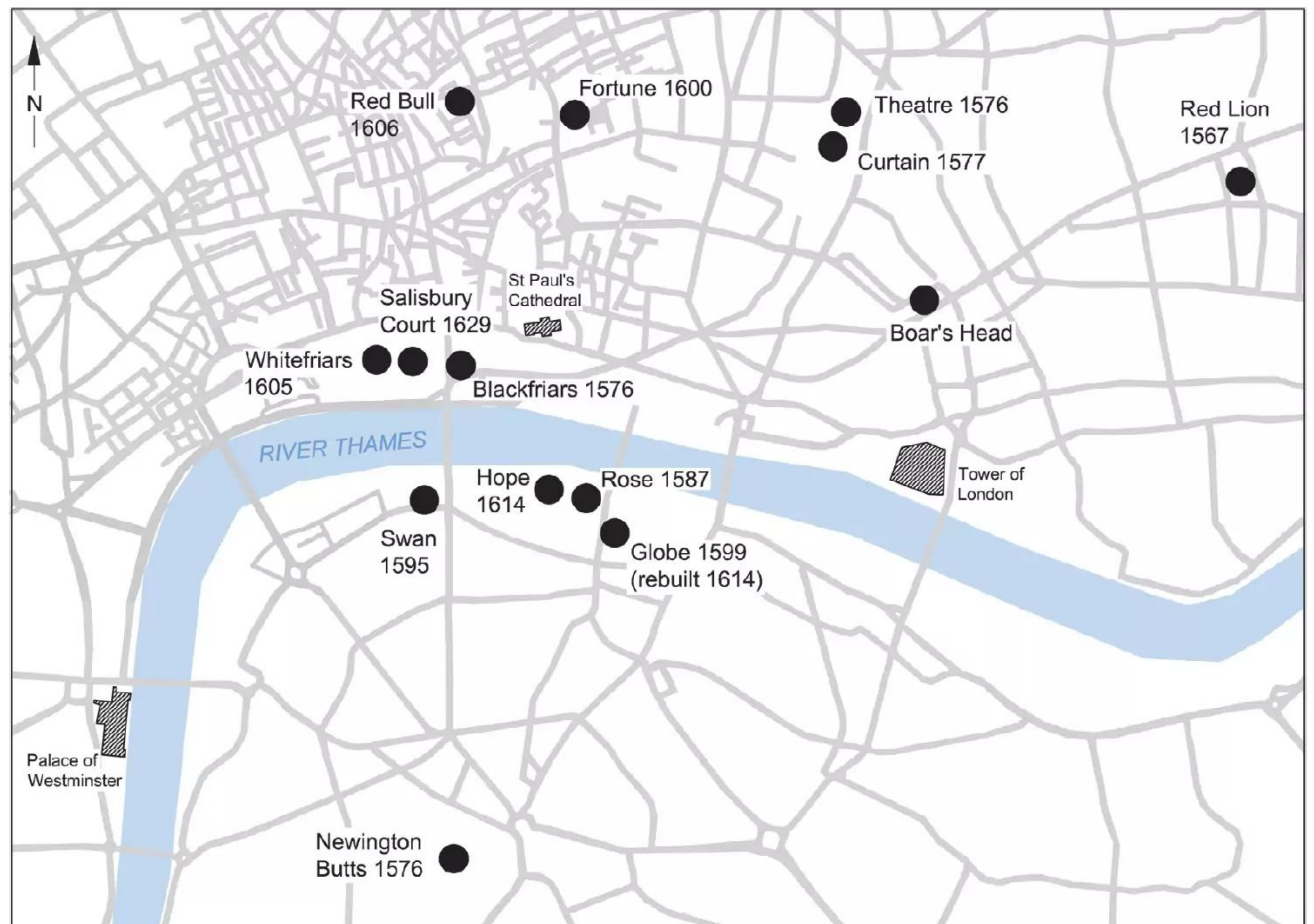
These are important places, no less important than the alehouses, taverns, and inns, and what defined them was unlikely to have been set in stone. Farmers would brew their own beer for their workers, and it is not hard to see how this might become a commercial activity. The playhouse is not referred to as being by an “inn” until the 1600s.

Given the number of glasses and ceramic cups found, it seems likely that the farmhouse was an inn by the time of the playhouse’s construction. The large number of wine drinking vessels recovered during the excavation dating to the 1600–1700s is also interesting, suggesting further distinctions of clientele.

Some 20 years later, the galleries had already been demolished, based on pottery found within the fills of the postholes that made up the gallery area. The playhouse structure was still in use some hundred years later, when, during the 1670s, the building was repaired and the stage modified into a type of pit, surrounded by postholes indicating that a fence surrounded it.

A high number of partial dog skeletons were recovered from that area; further analysis showed that the assemblage consisted of a variety of different breeds, some with healed trauma and pathology, including abnormal tooth wear on many teeth, which has led archaeologists to hypothesise that this may have been a place for animal baiting, or ad-hoc dog fighting with dogs chewing on cages or chains.

The end of activities within the old stage appears to have been in the late 1690s or early 1700s, when it was completely backfilled and levelled up to ground level, although leisure and play were still associated with the back of this drinking establishment: the 1703 map by Gascoyne illustrates buildings in the northeast and northwest corner, with the addition of bowling greens and ponds to the south.



Top: Reconstruction of the playhouse

Above: Map of London's Tudor playhouses

Post-medieval period and Whitechapel's links to the trade in enslaved people

With the rise of the British Empire during the eighteenth century, London went through a period of rapid growth. Slavery and racial capitalism provided the raw materials for industrialisation.

The Atlantic economy has been identified as the biggest change in modern economic history. Between 1699 and 1807, British and British colonial ports mounted 12,103 slaving voyages – with 3,351 setting out from London. Until the 1730s, London dominated the British trade in enslaved people, continuing to send ships to West Africa until 1803. During the eighteenth century the suburb of Mile End was

growing, with merchant houses, breweries, distilleries, and factories processing sugar from slave plantations.

By the end of the century, the mercantile population gradually moved out, and was replaced by new groups, such as Jewish migrants from Europe and Loyalist Black soldiers from the colonies.

On our site, archive work by historians tells us that the ‘Red Lion’ estate was being split and redeveloped, and there is an exponential increase in the activity and complexity in the archaeology uncovered.

In 1709, Thomas Hayes advertised a house and 40 acres of land at the Red Lion Farm for sale or let. In 1713, the Red Lion estate was described as the “messuage or tenement called... by the name of the Red Lyon with the



Gardiners House and... all the Outhouses Edifices Buildings Barns Stables Yards Gardens and Orchards.”

The western half of the estate, still largely open fields, was bought by the London Hospital, the first charitable infirmary on the east side of London, set up to provide relief to merchant sailors and labourers. With hospital construction under way (1752–78) the rest of the Red Lion estate was further subdivided.

By 1772, a lease of sale to the London Hospital developers describes the property as including a house called “the White Raven and formerly called the Gardener’ House and of and in the pleasure and other Garden thereunto belonging and adjoining to the said Red Lyon Farm’.”

Top: Detail of Gascoyne’s map of Stepney of 1703 with the ASE excavation area outlined in red

Above: John Rocque 1746 map of Stepney showing the three main building groups in blue

Maps show this, and the yards associated with buildings, and pleasure gardens to the south. The reason for our focus on these buildings and the drinking vessels, pipes, and other objects found in this area is that the White Raven became one of the two locations where the ‘London Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor’ held its meetings throughout 1786–7, the other being the Yorkshire Stingo in Marylebone.

This committee was closely tied to prominent abolitionists, both White and Black, which played a crucial role in distributing relief and forming a new colony in Sierra Leone. These relief centres were kept open for several hours each day and administered by fellow Black Londoners who dispensed loaves of bread, meals of broth, blankets and bedding, shoes and stockings.

One possibility is that the White Raven was part of a complex of buildings and yard on the western margins of our excavated area; indeed the eighteenth-century brickwork and ample tavern assemblages that were now more prevalent on this side of the site may support the idea.

Could a public engagement project help us find out more?

Buried Stories: the resistance of Black Londoners

ASE and Mercedes Baptiste Halliday from BlackArchaeo set out to provide some historic background to the story and uncover the lives of the people who would have lived in Whitechapel at the time of the White Raven.

Historians and archaeologists alike have noted the *longue durée* presence in Britain of people who today would be racialised as Black. They highlight that such pasts should not be marginalised, instead understood as an important component of Britain’s diverse heritage). In many popular historical narratives of Whitechapel, Huguenot, Jewish, and Bangladeshi histories are quite rightly celebrated, yet the histories of the Borough’s Black populations are rarely referenced.

Efforts have been made to rectify this over the years, for example, by the Tower Hamlets African and Caribbean Mental Health Organisation (THACMHO), and more recently through the London Borough of Tower Hamlet’s Library and Archives services initiative called ‘Communities of Liberation’.

The historical record reveals that there was a spike in London’s Black population following the defeat of the British Army in the Americas, when formerly enslaved Africans were offered their freedom in 1775 if they fought for the British against American patriots.

These men became known as the Black Loyalists, and many sought refuge in both Britain and Nova Scotia. Their history is rarely told in relation to Whitechapel. Estimations of London’s late eighteenth-century Black population range from 10– to 20,000 people, meaning between one and three people in every hundred were Black.

Alexander Byrd writes that: “Blacks – Asian, African, and American – were no strangers to the alleys and street corners of eighteenth-century London; nor were they uncommon in the city’s mansions or around its fashionable meeting places. Britons’ long participation in the Atlantic slave trade, their extensive planting interests in the Americas, and the island nation’s wide-ranging imperial concerns ensured that the capital captured a noticeable population of black servants, slaves, sailors, paupers, and performers.”

Many of them would have sought solidarity from others in the pubs and taverns along Mile End Green, now Raven Row. The hamlet was growing, with both fine houses, pubs, and overcrowded areas full of slum housing.

One instance of community support, which took place in September 1786, is particularly striking. Using their military expertise, a group of Black Loyalists banded together to resist the arrest of Jack Pegg, a Black Corporal, whose role was to administer the relief.

“After he was arrested, the black men, to the number of about one hundred, insisted, that the Officer should not take him away; and hallooed out to their comrades, ‘shut the gates!’ . . . But Mr. Drawwater, and his men, being resolute, they got the prisoner, with difficulty, on the outside of the gates . . .

“Several of [the black men] instantly armed themselves with sticks &c. and came on a second time; and after a desperate onset, in Mile-End road, in which Mr. Drawwater’s cloaths were torn off, and he was terribly bruised on the head, and almost every part of his body, they rescued the prisoner, and carried him off in triumph.”

Historians like Braidwood and Hanley

write that Mile End was a centre for London's Black population, who looked to prominent leaders like Ottobah Cugoano (1757-1791) and Olaudah Equiano that had formed the first all-Black political organisation of its kind in Britain, called 'The Sons of Africa', by December 1787.

This corresponding society wrote public and private letters to prominent figures, including the Prince of Wales, in support of their efforts toward abolition. Both Equiano and Cugoano published works calling for an end to slavery and the emancipation of all enslaved people.

The area would have been familiar to at least one of the committee members who was also a board member of the London Hospital, Jonas Hanway, and the

Right: Some of the 62kg of clay pipes dating from the sixteenth to nineteenth century found at the site. Tobacco was a major part of the Atlantic trade and was grown in plantations in the American colonies by enslaved workers. It was largely associated with Ale house culture



ASE [2]



fact that as mentioned above, East London had been a long-standing home to London Black population and recent arrivals, it would make sense to choose this area as a place for their committee meetings. The meetings were held in conjunction with prominent spokespeople for potential settlers wanting to establish a new settler colony, 'Land of Freedom', today known as Sierra Leone.

Community outreach and engagement by Sarah Wolferstan

Having found the Red Lion, our attention turned to finding the White

Middle: The London Hospital: viewed from the north, 1753, engraving by Jean Baptiste Claude Chatelain. Buildings near the Red Lion can be seen to the left. Remains of the civil war fortifications can be seen to the right

Above: Selection of drinking vessels include wine glasses and a Frechen Stoneware Bartmann jug

Raven and telling this lost story in partnership with the local community. Given the significant connection to Black history and archaeology, it became apparent that community-based outreach was important.

Archaeology South East's (ASE) initial outreach strategy for this project comprised of regular blogposts and a press release on the discovery of the Red Lion playhouse, which gained a lot of traction and led to our involvement in a new research partnership, the Archaeothatre collective, co-creating playhouse research and engagement through digital world building. It was only as all the research was being analysed

that we realised we had a link to the White Raven.

ASE's engagement team started our work with two professionals with a background in archaeology and youth engagement: Mercedes Baptiste Halliday, UCL Alumni and founder of BlackArchaeo, and Professional Storyteller and musician; and Alim Kamara, founder of StorieStorie.

Archaeologists, planning consultants, and UCL curators, professors, and students came together to brainstorm on project approaches, and think about storytelling as a method for engagement. Alim's involvement was particularly emotive, as he has roots in Sierra Leone. The story inspired his creativity, resulting in a moving poem.

BlackArchaeo at UCL East by Mercedes Baptiste Halliday

BlackArchaeo was founded in 2022 and seeks to promote the wellbeing of Black and Brown people through archaeology, heritage, art, and ecology.



It has a transformative social justice approach, recognising the affordances of creatively engaging with the past and the natural world to promote connectivity and healing.

Particularly given the colonial roots of disciplines like archaeology, the lack of participation of Black and Brown people in the profession (the last 'Profiling the Profession' report in 2021 revealed that 97% of archaeologists in the UK are white), could be understood as an enduring, ever-present colonial legacy.

The promotion of community engagement, and the decentralisation of knowledge, is an essential part of decolonialising archaeology.

Having partnered with a range of arts, cultural, and heritage organisations, including the London Museum, UCL's Institute of Archaeology, Maslaha, Studio Voltaire, Wild in the City, Royal Museums Greenwich, and the London Wildlife

Top Looking at objects from the Site with Alim, Mercedes and staff from UCL Culture Lab

Above left: Young people during the BlackArchaeo Urban Ecologies summer school

Above right: An earthenware jug excavated from the site

Trust – from mudlarking to landscape walks, to photography workshops and wildlife conservation – BlackArchaeo recognises people's entanglements with the more-than-human world, and the reciprocal nature of care.

In 2023, with support from Impact on Urban Health, I ran a week-long summer school for 16 to 19-year-olds in London entitled Urban Ecologies, to address climate injustices, and how they disproportionately affect Black and Brown urban communities.

With a particular focus on climate anxiety that many young people experience, the week involved museum and gallery visits, hikes, art workshops, and lectures, to help young people explore the potentials of these spaces and creative activations to support their wellbeing.

I felt well placed to support ASE build partnerships, starting with community

historians from the Whitechapel area. THACMHO's Engagement with the History of the White Raven Tavern by Harry Cumberbatch, Fabian Tompsett, Dorothy Du Boulay.

Nearly 25 years have passed since THACMHO started to develop its Health Through History Initiative. We hope this project can bring its learning to a new generation of Londoners.

We met staff from ASE and Mercedes at a second storytelling and archaeology workshop at Tower Hamlet's Town Hall, visiting the Whitechapel Central site, and learning about its archaeology as well as young UCL students' perspectives.

As steering group members of a local history project called 'Communities of Liberation', we have been supporting local researchers who were delving into the archive to uncover the names and stories of individuals of African descent who lived, worked, and played in the borough in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

The location of the White Raven, and the lives of the many Black Londoners who lived in Whitechapel and beyond, had been a topic of interest to us as locals and historians for a considerable period, particularly through the work of the THACMHO.

We introduced ASE to our work, and the research of another member of the group, Fabian Tompsett, and the three of us visited the UCL Culture Lab, looked at the artefacts from Whitechapel Central and together agreed to co-organise an exhibition in the space.

THACMHO was founded in 1996 as a mental health service users group for the African and Caribbean communities. The Health Through History Committee was an additional project to THACMHO's other activities. Our committee had discovered that five of the writers mentioned in Vincent Carretta's *Unchained Voices: An Anthology* (1996) had all interacted with London's East End in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

These were Phillis Wheatley, Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, John Marrant, Olaudah Equiano, and Ottobah Cugoana. As part of Black History Month, 2001, we organised its first Power Writers walks, having identified five African Writers who came to London's East End and found that we could make a short walk visiting

locations connected with each individual. Our members would read out short pieces by each of the Power Writers, followed by a brief discussion of the writer's contribution. The walk would end at the Whitechapel Mission, who kindly hosted the group, with the support of Tony Miller.

The presence of the eighteenth-century brick work in the cellar of the mission, at the time, led us to believe that it as the most likely site of the White Raven Tavern and a site of importance for London's African population in the 1780s, and we called out for further research to be carried out.

The development of the walk was designed to be inclusive, and to provide an embodied, experiential sense of place. As we went from location-to-location, participants would sometimes meet old friends and sometimes make new friends, breaking off into splinter groups as they negotiated through the bustling streets. The walks facilitated a life-affirming psycho-geographic connection between the local participants of African descent and the city they came to live in.

The five writers were not isolated individuals, but rather a selection of the Black community in London's East End, whose presence endured in the historical record thanks to the publication of their books.

Stephen Braidwood's book *Black Poor and White Philanthropists* (1994) provided a book-length account of the Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor, highlighting the role of the White Raven as a meeting place particularly for Black Loyalists who had fought for the British Army in the American War of Independence. Promised their freedom by the British, they were evacuated from



Above: Photography of a 'Power Writers' guided walk, outside St Botolph's church

Right: Excavations taking place on the site of the White Raven



Below: Left to right: Philip Morgan, Fabián Tompsett, Beverley Clarke, Harry Cumberbatch, Sadie Parkes, Barrington Johnson, Jennifer Jones, and Sidney Millin at the launch of the revised edition of Power Writers during BHM 2005



the newly independent colonies following their defeat.

At this time English law required the local parish to keep a record of baptism, and those that found themselves subsequently destitute were expected to return to their original parish, where they would be provided for by that community. This meant that these army veterans were often reduced to begging on the streets of London.

The site then became a principal recruiting place for the resettlement of these veterans and others who wanted to go with them, to create an English colony in Sierra Leone.

At the time of THACMHOs inception, not much academic attention was given to Black presence in British historical narratives. We found our interpretations of the past largely dismissed, with some members even being misdiagnosed by psychiatric professionals as delusional. The denial, erasure, and pathologisation of Black people's interactions with the past have real, material effects on their wellbeing in the present. This is particularly disheartening given the values of THACMHO, and our agenda to promote healing and connectivity.

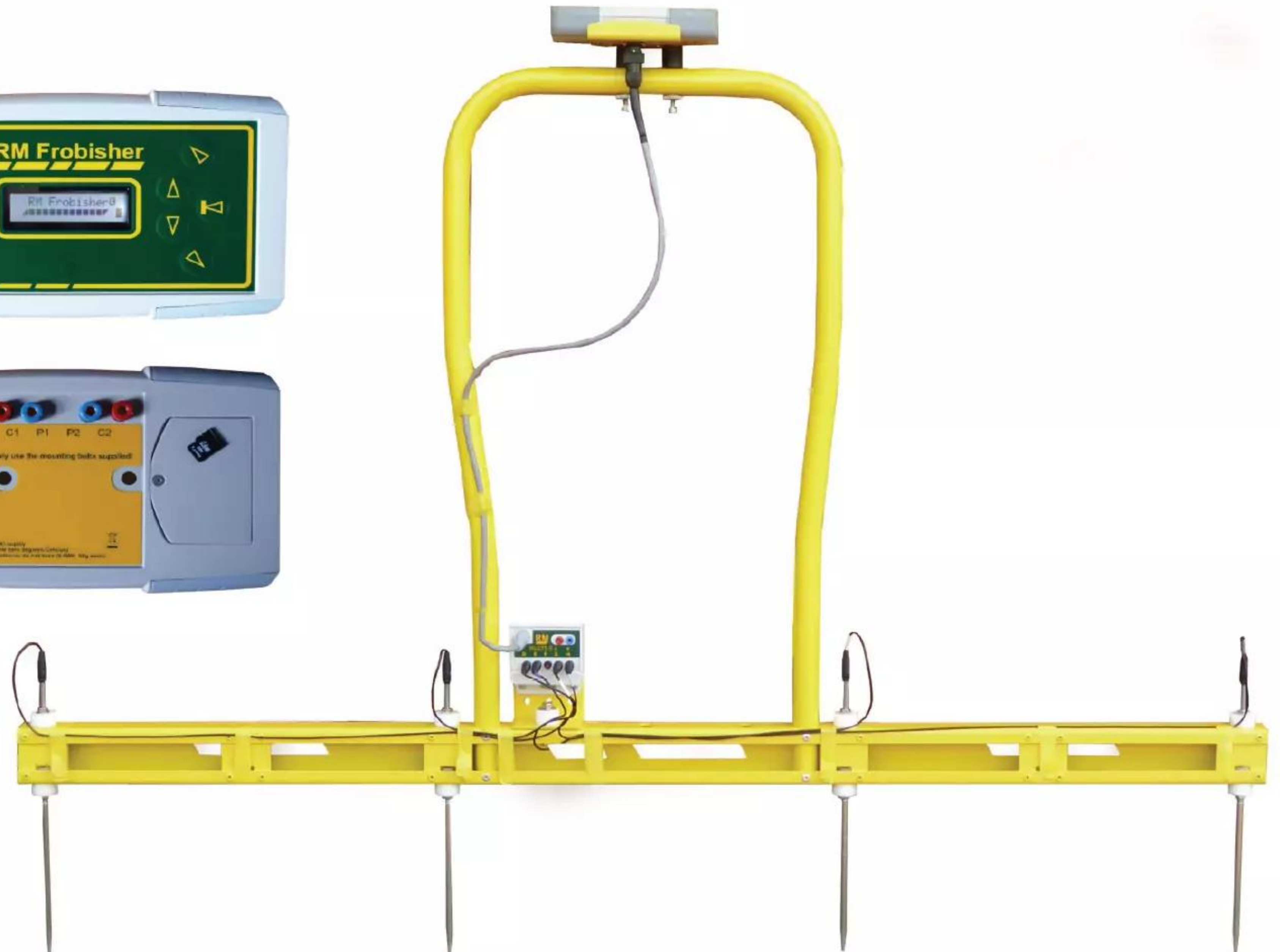
This erasure can further be identified in the booklet *The Hamlets and the Tower: 1000 Years of Tower Hamlets' History* published by Tower Hamlets Council (2000). The first time Africans are mentioned are Somalian sailors who settled in Tower Hamlets during the 1950s. Fortunately,

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when this matter was raised, the Council agreed with the concerns and provided some funding to support THACMHO in our publication of a booklet version of the guided walk, entitled *Power Writers and the Struggle Against Slavery* (2025).

Today, the historic Black presence in the borough of Tower Hamlets, and in Britain more broadly, is more widely recognised and celebrated, although there is more work to be done, particularly in archaeology.

We recognise the incredible legacy of THACMHO, and the enduring effect of its members' role in advocating for the wellbeing of Black communities and its ongoing contribution to presencing Black people in British history.

Archive workshop

With the support of UCL and Tower Hamlets archive, ASE and BlackArchaeo held a joint workshop, with researchers from Northeastern University, UCL students, community researchers, and representatives from THACMHO and the Communities of Liberation project.

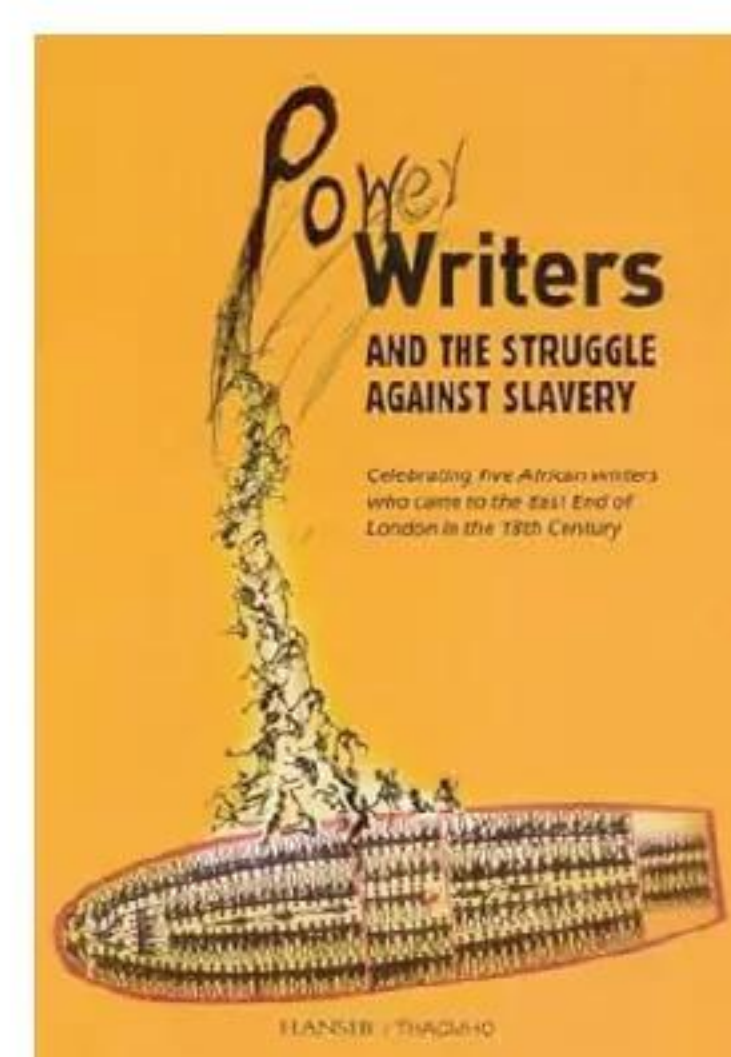
During the workshop, the local borough archivist had unearthed an image of a 'White Raven' pub next to the Salvation Army bowling alley on Raven Row. Fabian contacted the Salvation Army historian, who confirmed that their archive included documents which refer to meetings being held in the mid-nineteenth century in Alexander Hall, a covered Skittle Alley attached to the White Raven public house on Raven Street.

This seems to be confirmed by two separate pub history projects (pubology, and pubwiki) which list a 'White Raven Tavern' on Cavell St. This also identifies the landlords who lived at the pub over the years. A gap in landlords between 1797 and 1831 may indicate a period of closure, when the pub may have moved to the location referred to in the 1860s history of the Salvation Army.

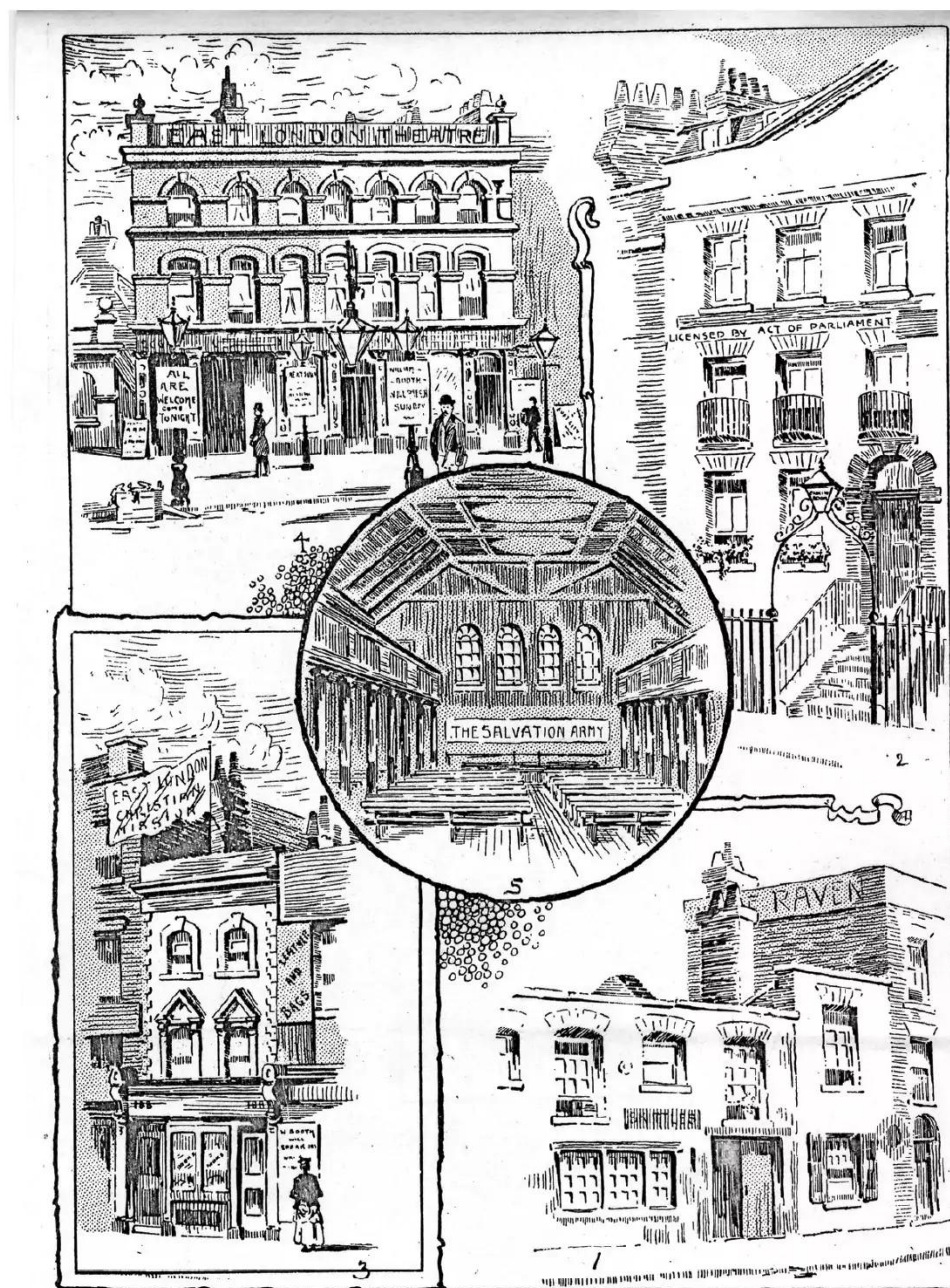
Our exhibition and future work – next steps

Out of this collaboration came the opportunity to curate an exhibition at UCL East's Culture Lab, a teaching and sharing space for students, artists, and community groups. Its main aim is to

Right: Illustration showing the White Raven next to a skittle alley used by the Salvation Army during the 19th century showing the last location of the tavern, adjacent to ASE's excavation site



Above: Front cover of the book published by HANSIB/THACMHO 'Power Writers and the struggle against slavery.' Artwork by Ruth Reviere



- 1.—Skittle Alley attached to "White Raven" Public-house.
- 2.—23, New Road. Used on Sundays only. Dancing-rooms through the week.
- 3.—188, Whitechapel Road. Low Beer-shop, the "Eastern Star," our first H.Q.
- 4.—The "Effingham," or East London Theatre.
- 5.—272, Whitechapel Road. The old Hall, before alteration.

help communities make their own exhibitions. Combining archaeological, archival, and contemporary material, the group worked together to co-curate an exhibition for the Culture Lab's upcoming exhibition, titled Patterns.

The exhibition tells the story of the Whitechapel excavation; the people, the buildings, the objects, the things from the past, present, and future, that are drawn into its orbit.

This collaborative approach to curation means that the local Black community's long-term interest and situated knowledge of the site was properly represented, alongside archaeological findings and conclusions.

We hope that the exhibition will act as a springboard, to inspire further conversations and collaborations in relation to the White Raven Tavern and Whitechapel's underappreciated Black histories and archaeologies. It speaks to the potential of archaeology

to increase connectivity, between people, landscapes, and temporalities.

Patterns: how to visit

Starting from June 2025 and for the following 12 months, the exhibition will be held at: UCL's Culture Lab, UCL East Marshgate Building, 7 Sidings Street, Stratford, London, E20 2AE.

We will be holding workshops and events in partnership with local organisations throughout the year, and as part of Festival of Archaeology on 21 July. For more information and how to get involved:

- www.ucl.ac.uk/creative-cultural-industries/culture-lab
- www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology-south-east
- www.storiestorie.com
- www.linkedin.com/company/black-archaeo/
- www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history/communities-of-liberation-project ■

Heritage as healing:

Re-entangling heritage, ecology, and psychology

Harriet Sams explores the intersection where heritage, ecology, and psychology meet, and how our connections to our surrounding heritage landscapes can offer comfort, solace, and contribute to our overall wellbeing.



Above: Harriet Sams

This triquetra, a Trinity Knot of heritage, ecology, and psychology, holds a vast amount of potency for how people can connect with, and find meaning in, the archaeo-ecological landscapes in which they find themselves. Existing practices such as ‘cultural heritage therapy’, ‘ecotherapy’, and other nature-related wellbeing activities work at this intersection with varying purposes and varying focuses.

I hope to explain how I came to be involved with working at this meeting place, what meaning I have found there, and how working in such an interdisciplinary way is relevant, indeed necessary, for the heritage sector to embrace.

I share some examples of impactful projects that have been run in recent years and encourage personal and collective narratives about experiences, ideas that may feel uncomfortable to traditional, mechanistic notions of archaeology, which have more usually sat within psychology. This involves reimagining what heritage has to offer.

Right: Harriet works at many kinds of heritage landscapes, often in forgotten or unwanted places



MOLLY MATCHAM [2]

Questioning cultural norms of how we connect to, value, and learn from the past is pivotal to our approach to the future, encouraging a more wholesome human-land relationship.

I write from the viewpoint of someone who was once a field archaeologist, now turned academic, tutor, and occasional article writer. In the many years since my first ever paid fieldwork jobs in the Republic of Ireland, I have developed a somewhat broadly eclectic, but interrelated (in my mind, at least) view of heritage, one that incorporates into itself ecology and psychology, climate studies, and green economics.

I currently train students to become ecotherapy practitioners, work with the Climate Psychology Alliance charity, and deliver an immersive course in the applicability of archaeotherapy. Much like ‘cultural heritage therapy’ it supports wellbeing through heritage landscapes.

Archaeotherapy works globally with clients and participants within an archaeo-ecological landscape (by that I mean a landscape that has within it ecological as well as human-focused heritage characteristics), often for personal wellbeing purposes, but more frequently to support a sense of meaning, community, or belonging in the places

chosen. It is this work especially, which focuses on supporting people as they interact directly with the human-shaped world, that has moulded the thoughts expressed in this article.

I grew up in the county of Cumbria where, as a child, I explored the remote lands of the Pennines and spent hours wandering aimlessly through the past, writ large as it was upon the living world. I was surrounded by upland landscapes, dotted with Iron Age settlements.

I lived on the bank of the Lyvennet river, the same one mentioned by the early Brittonic poet Taliesin when he describes his 'Old North' the Hen Ogledd. I felt a direct connection to the spirit of place, and the spirit of the past.

One day when I was around 10-years-old, a gaggle of students from the

Below right:
Remains of brick
built industrial
pillars at the edge
of the quarry at
Geltsdale

from one of the display cabinets filled with sacred Egyptian artefacts.

During the 2000s, after university, a subsequent career in commercial archaeology gave me the standard training in archaeological practice: Stratigraphy; reductionist concepts of processes; excavation skills; planning and scale; finds preservation; environmental processes; cost; contract; deadlines; and other industry norms.

At the same time as being fully immersed in the well-oiled mechanism of commercial archaeology, life twisted and turned through the challenges, mishaps, and pain of young adulthood. In these

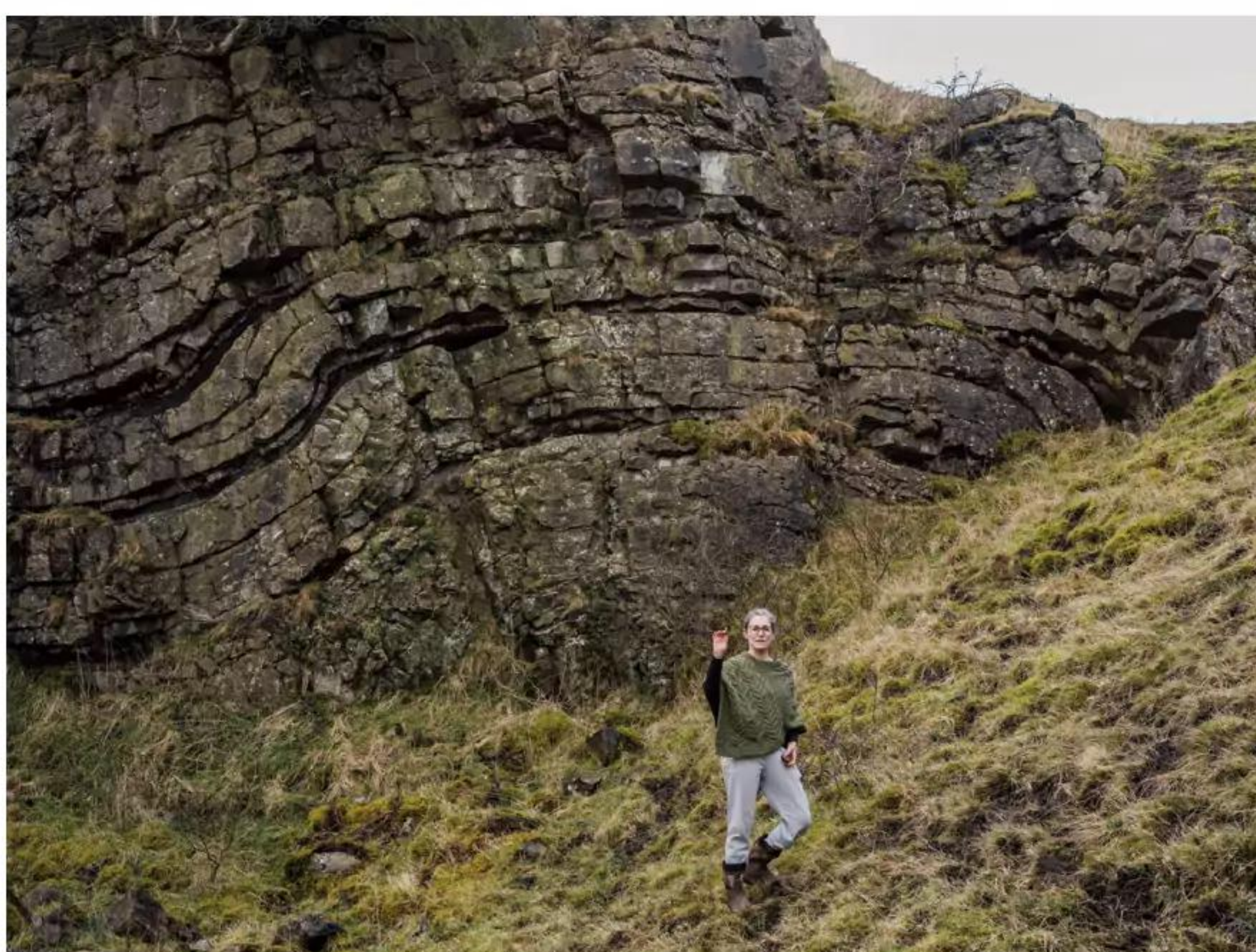
and community behaviours. In New Zealand, especially, experiences of working with Māori clients taught me a great deal about the importance of landscape to culture, to Iwi or tribe, Marae, the tribal community space, and tangata whenua, the Indigenous people of the land.

I then returned to the UK to excavate more. Through working with Māori clients, and subsequent, rather lifeless experiences on archaeological sites around the UK, I began to consider my Western archaeological immersion in a new light. I began to acknowledge that the reductionist process of data

HARRIET SAMS



MOLLY MATCHAM



archaeology department of a university (was it Leicester? I don't recall, so far back, in enough detail) knocked on our cottage door and asked us who owned the field next to us (it wasn't ours) because there was an Iron Age well in it that they were going to excavate.

This, alongside a day – a very long day – trip to the British Museum in London by bus, made me convinced I wanted to become a prehistoric archaeologist, despite the ferocious earache I picked up

Top: The Quarry
Head, Geltsdale,
Cumbria

Above: Harriet
stands inside the
quarry, dwarfed by
buckled and uplifted
layers exposed by the
process of quarrying



HARRIET SAMS

occasionally difficult times, it felt like the land, and moreover the ancient human-land connection that I was privy to in the field, kept a comforting hold of me.

This connection was, in my experience, despite the mechanisms of archaeological professionalism promoting a shift from the felt sense of a heritage landscape that I was a living part of, towards focusing upon data collection, detachment, and salvaging what was to be destroyed.

In other words, I didn't necessarily feel that the professional approach to commercial archaeology had the capacity to support or even acknowledge profound connection and teachings coming from the heritage in which I was immersed.

Belonging to the landscape

After I left field archaeology, I trained to become a Probation Officer, working first in West Yorkshire, and then in New Zealand. It was during this time that I began to understand more about sociological and psychological aspects of human culture, landscape, and individual

collection through archaeology, much as it enabled occasional deeply connective moments between archaeologist and archaeology, was inherently cold, devoid of connection.

The point of commercial archaeology was to collect data and material, and to preserve some of what was inevitably about to be destroyed. Of particular poignancy was the process of exhuming human remains, in a way that felt utterly stark, professional, and devoid of tangible connection. It felt worlds away, or perhaps more accurately, worldviews away, from the inherently crucial role landscape has to Māori ways of belonging upon the land and to ancestors, their whakapapa.

Māori culture sees the land as an inherent, necessary part of what makes a human healthy, sane, and functioning. There is no duality between 'nature' and human. They are essentially one; non-dual. If the land is hurt, the humans are hurt, and vice versa. This has much to do with the ceremonial laying of human remains within the land, thus closing entirely the natural cycle of ecological

Between the Barrows 2016



Right: An excavated Bronze Age scraper unearthed during the *Between the Barrows* project

Top: The creation of clay vessels at site reflects a connection to the past through the power of objects

The aims of the project were to invite the community to spend time with the site, looking at the human heritage and ecology of the site as an enmeshed whole, rather than focusing on only human-caused remains.

Foundational to the thinking behind this project was the Polynesian concept of hau, where objects and place have a spirit. Creativity was as welcome as undertaking



structured archaeological activities. Although not necessarily unfamiliar to Classical Western philosophy, the genius loci of place in this

project explicitly incorporated other-than-human elements, such as ecological beings, the finds, the land itself, as well as the humans themselves.

belonging, marked by community ritual that embraces a long-term cultural valuing of place, and a deep spiritual significance between human and land.

I began to question if Westernised cultural norms, where, broadly speaking, we have to accept landscape changes as an obvious part of 'progress', one's food is not home grown, landscapes are not communal, and our home is not necessarily where our ancestors lived and were buried, could ever recognise the central role of land and ancestors that I had been exposed to in New Zealand?

A sustainable future?

In later years I undertook an MSc in Green Economy at Bournemouth University. The ecological crisis was becoming more noticeable, yet I was abundantly aware that I had very little understanding of it, and media declarations were confusing and at times contradictory. It felt important to educate

myself on what was truly happening.

The MSc broadly covered important aspects of the Green Economy, such as sustainability science, green technologies, and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, but the modules I found to be the most interesting (and most relevant to the work that I found most appealing) focused upon concepts around Indigenous rights, environmental law, and social justice.

In other words, it became clear to me that it wasn't going to be technological solutions alone that would address the polycrisis; equally, there is a need to focus upon how humans are in direct relationship (or not) with the land, who control, extract from, develop and cultivate, and whether we could fundamentally shift behaviours towards living better upon a finite planet than we currently have.

This shift may, possibly, encourage wiser and more long-term ways of

working with the biosphere, rather than against it, I surmised. This Master's degree also helped me consider the role an archaeological point of view could play in overtly future-focused conversations in the sustainability movement. It was notable that, in most cases when considering the Green Economy, there was very little good said about the relationship Westernised humans had to 'nature' in historical terms.

Western humans are seen as a scourge and a menace, to blame for a lot (if not most) of the polycrisis now abundantly clear to see. Intervention, that could be of benefit or 'fix' things were, therefore, technological or scientific, reductionist and quantitative, rarely considered to be connective, behavioural, cultural, or (let's whisper it) spiritual.

Current sustainability narratives are generally focused upon what they perceive to be economically viable, achievable, and scalable: Scientific breakthroughs; economic leverage; agricultural and technological shifts in producer/consumer behaviours; and 'net zero' targets.

In heritage circles, sustainability narratives constellate around rescuing at-risk sites, learning technological lessons from past civilisations, or advancements of sustainable visitor attraction management. These narratives are not in any way erroneous. They recognise that humans really do need to learn from the past, restore what has been lost, protect what we cherish, and relinquish material culture as mechanisms of change (such as sea level rising, planetary climatic derangement, or acidification of the hydrological system) demand, while rescuing as much as we can, while we can.

When the past is seen as an asset to exploit, then of course, materially this is a necessary course of action. But heritage is not static, nor is it consigned to the past. It is a living, breathing part of the ecological whole, which invites relationship, meaning making, and necessary connection, even as it is under threat. Is there room in current heritage management models for a different kind of 'valuing' of archaeo-ecological land, one that foregrounds relationship, regardless of the material outcome of a site?

A place where three worlds collide

I return to the question I posed earlier: Can Western culture ever recognise a central role for land and ancestors, one

that forms, retains, and supports people and communities? Exploring this question has burgeoned into a doctorate thesis with Bournemouth University, the researching of which I am around two-thirds of the way through.

What I have found is reassuring: When people spend time in heritage, of all kinds, not just culturally accepted 'healing' spaces such as Stonehenge, something meaningful occurs for them. Heritage engagement, in a bottom-up way, where the participant has a direct interaction with a site, rather than an 'expert' telling them what they think people need to know, elicits beneficent feelings of belonging, grief, solace, awe, peace, even joy. It seems that under our very noses people have been quietly connected to the heritage in the landscape without an 'expert' in sight.

Indigenism, such as so profoundly integrated by Māoris, is significantly different to the post-colonialist worldview of cultural Westernised disconnect that most of those reading this currently inhabit. Yet a localism of personal connection to the land beneath our own feet, where our family are buried, our local village or town, does share qualities of wholesomely belonging to the places we love.

Archaeo-ecological connection may, as late-stage neo-liberal, capitalist, post-truth countries race to the bottom, be nearly impossible to reintegrate into the developed world's cultural norms, en masse. And I am not on a one-woman mission to make it happen. I will, however, state clearly that it is way overdue that Western humans need to find their own way back to a far more wholesome relationship to ancestral landscapes, ecological responsibility, and planetary care.

Fortunately, many people in the heritage and ecological sectors, as well as psychological professionals, are recognising the huge importance of working with landscape to enhance, support, and heal deeply seated issues around disconnect, climate grief, and unbelonging.

Having tangible ways to experience the land enormously benefits individuals and communities. Those benefits include having a sense of impermanence that offers comfort, tending one's grief, feelings of responsibility to future generations, self-belief, love of wholesome cultivation and food production, a recognition of the lessons

from history, love of our ancestors, despite the challenges and troubles they may have perpetrated, and myriad other nuanced, sometimes mystical experiences that people receive from the human-changed land.

Solastalgia

Forest Head RSPB reserve in north Cumbria has within it a large, disused open cast limestone and coal mine, workings, multiple lime kilns, dismantled railways, and a long history of community, labour, and death. It also has two Neolithic rock art outcrops, called the Tortie stones, sitting cheek-by-jowl with overburden heaps.

I have been going to this place over the years, in all weathers, alone or with others. This location is, in many ways, a visceral wound that the RSPB is gently and compassionately healing. Equally, it is a scheduled monument and is significant in its own right as an example of Victorian

mining. Here it is possible to bear witness to a land that has been exploited for economic gain, and if you stop at the local 'Hub' shop and community centre, you can hear stories about people's ancestors who worked, and died, in the mines.

Here, in such a desolate landscape, we can consider many dark things. Hopelessness, fear, personal grief, or collective pain in the face of our own needs and acculturation. We witness the long-term ramifications of Victorian progress narratives: Leachates; toxic waterways; inhospitable landscapes; and large spoil heaps where not much grows. Here it is safe to speak the unspeakable, because the land mirrors it back to us.

And then, once the grief of the place has been given space to be felt, we witness the soft edges of healing as they work to bring the place back into the fold of life. The kestrel overhead scans for rodents, the rabbits burrow, mosses and lichens grow over the perilously leaning store

Later Prehistoric Norfolk Project 2023



Right: Arminghall Timber Circle and Henge community dig 2023

Top: An example of a sketch by participant Robert Fairclough at Arminghall Timber circle and Henge community dig

Its aims were to support local people to connect with an archaeological dig at Arminghall Timber Circle and Henge. International in scope, participants ranged from those who experienced mental health challenges, students and those with educational needs, to the general public.

As well as utilising excavation techniques, art, photography, song, and music were also employed throughout the experiences on site, and were included in the final data collection.

The project clearly aimed to warm up the cold data of a regular site excavation, embracing the presence of the participants into the ongoing story of such an ancient place. Responses ranged from being excited to be at a site, the joy of

finding coins, to reflecting how wonderful it is to find community, and have a common goal with other people.



ANDY HUTCHEON [2]

house columns, iron rusts, to return its vital ingredient for life back into the cycle, to be picked up once more and reused by another being.

We see that this place is not as orphaned from the cycle of life as it first seems. As humans we spend time there, making a wheel from the dark soil kicked up by moles, creating it upon the embankment where the railway once ran from here to the industrial heart of the northeast's factories. The simple act of creativity connects us to the ongoing story of place: this is not a museum piece, forever frozen in time, but a living, breathing, wounded, place.

Glenn Albrecht, philosopher and neologist, created the rather fitting term for the feeling that the place you love has been radically changed by human action: Solastalgia. Nostalgia for a place that used to give you comfort and solace, a place that no longer exists as it once was. As I began to work with people whose local landscapes had been perceived to have been damaged in some way, I realised that they were experiencing precisely the same thing as those whose lands are still untouched and whole. What unites people's experiences, no matter which landscape they work upon, is relationship to place.

Landscape, heritage, and ancestor work are ecological. Sites where lichens, mosses, rabbits, kestrel, and moles live are no longer human domains alone. A site, therefore, is more than merely the archaeology as a traditional interpretation would have it. The archaeology of a site is, I would argue, evidence of ecology building up in what is known as succession, in a thoroughly natural and sequential manner, one layer at a time, one species at a time.

Archaeology is not merely defined as humans excavating human activity, but humans excavating ecological succession, with human activity enmeshed within that succession. And herein lies the magic of landscape connection; the place has changed but it still has a presence. It has been used, wounded, exploited, perhaps. You may not even be able to access that place as you once did, but it still exists somehow in a new form. It harbours new life, different from what we may think of as ideal, pristine, untouched, pure. It has traces of human occupation, human ingenuity, domestication, and endurance.

The land is not simply 'human', nor is it simply 'ecological'. It is both. And we realise that humans are ecology. Such forces of change and integration are the



Top: Touching the earth at Geltsdale quarry

Above: Participants made a wheel out of soil kicked up by moles. It represented the wheel of time, of ideas of 'progress' as it turns ever on, and of being taken from where we belong and made to work elsewhere



same for us too. We are forever changing, experiencing things in our lives, making decisions, and having events affect us. We shift roles, we grow, we lose, and we gain. The human-made landscape mirrors us in a powerful way. What new relationship do you wish to create with this place now?

Deeper connections

I began my PhD at Bournemouth in January 2021, with two truly wonderful supervisors, Professor Timothy Darvill and Professor Vanessa Heaslip. In 2018, they had run the Human Henge project at Stonehenge with the Restoration Trust.

Reading about this project was a pivotal moment for me; it was when I realised that the kind of enmeshed connection I had received from the land as a child was recognised in others. It also led me to rather cheekily emailing Tim directly and demanding that he become my supervisor. Luckily for me, he said yes, suggesting too that Vanessa, who is a psychology nursing professor, be my second supervisor. And so was inadvertently born a research project that

had in its very DNA an interdisciplinary heart. I was inevitably going to have to straddle the worlds of archaeology and psychology. My own training in ecotherapy and Green Economy would make up the third discipline.

Heartbreakingly, Tim died in October 2024. I promised to him that I would work as hard as I could to promote the heritage sector's emergence towards supporting psychological, ecological, therapeutic, cultural, communal, and even spiritual, ways of truly belonging to the land.

My research strongly supports the idea that people make and sustain meaningful connection to heritage sites, but that often they feel that their experiences on the land are not culturally acceptable, often never telling anyone else for many years about meaningful moments they've had. This can be partly due to stigmas or shame for what is experienced, such as them 'hearing' the land, intuitive feelings arising, diffuse and abstract experiences of oneness or the Divine, and other quasi-spiritual experiences, such as connecting to the genius loci.

What is most certainly welcome is the giving of permission for communities to connect with sites in a more overtly acceptable way, without judgement. I look forward to the day when heritage professionals truly embrace bottom-up ways that individuals and communities connect to their own archaeo-ecological landscapes, promoting and embracing a wholesome connection to the land that we love.

This might involve considering how communities mark significant times of the year through ritual, offering much stronger support for therapeutic access to sites by professions or by the general public, supporting community art, celebrations and events that promote ecological wholeness, or simply acknowledging the power that sites have to teach, guide, and support people in many varied and magical ways.

It requires allowing for far greater openness about the way the land speaks, teaches, and guides us. The land is always speaking, no matter what kind of heritage exists upon it. We need more than ever to listen to the wisdom of the land, the beings upon it, and our own past. It lies all around us, orphaned from us as we recklessly pursue ever further disconnected ways of being human, but always ready to begin a new relationship with us, if we are ready to pay attention. ■



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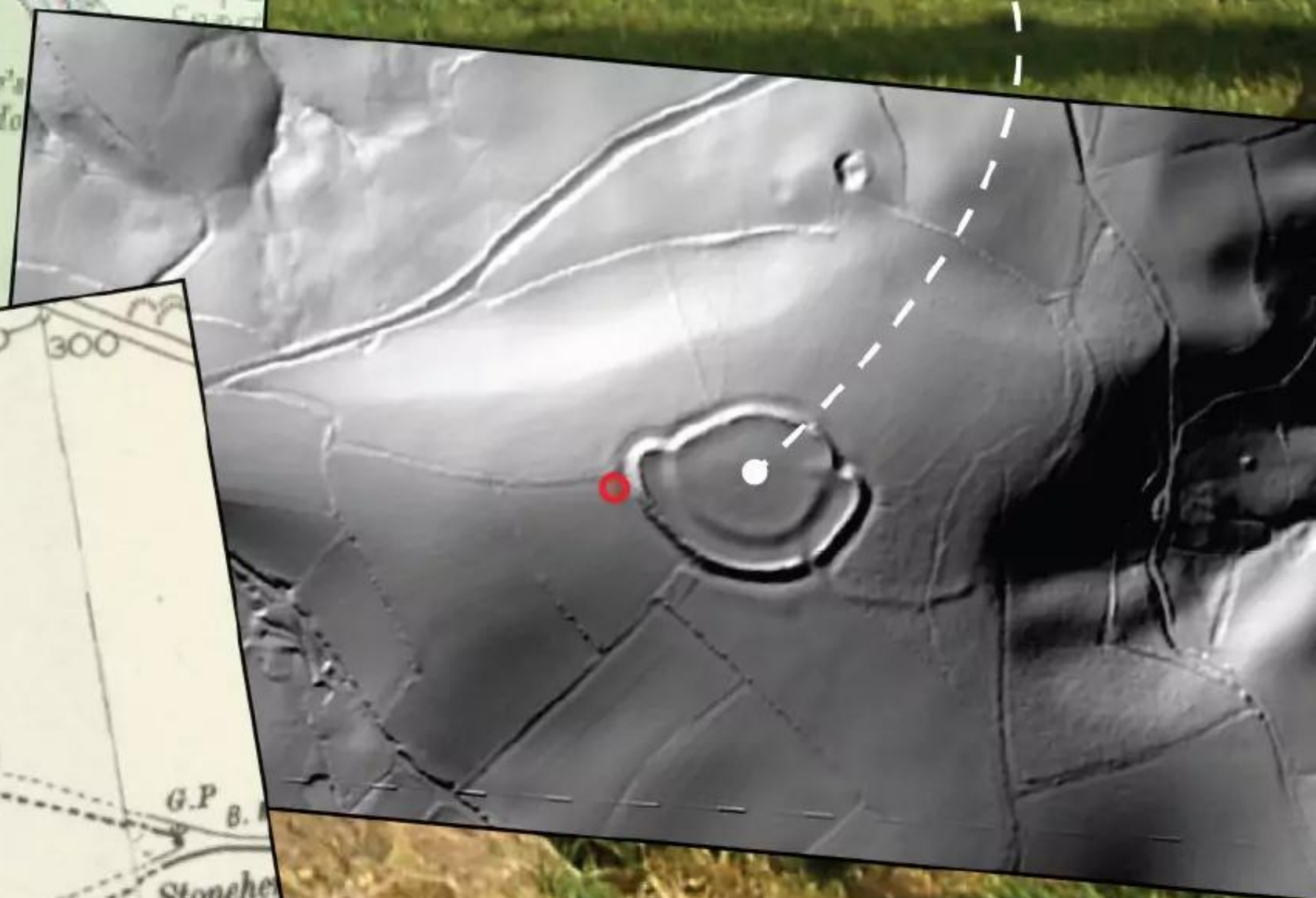
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Arches: A tool for protecting the historic environment and promoting information access

The Getty Conservation Institute in partnership with Historic England are in the process of revolutionising data about our collective cultural heritage. Here, Stuart Cakebread, Emily La Trobe-Bateman, David Myers, and Nina Young unpick how data-heavy historic environment records can be unlocked to reach their full potential and made accessible to all.

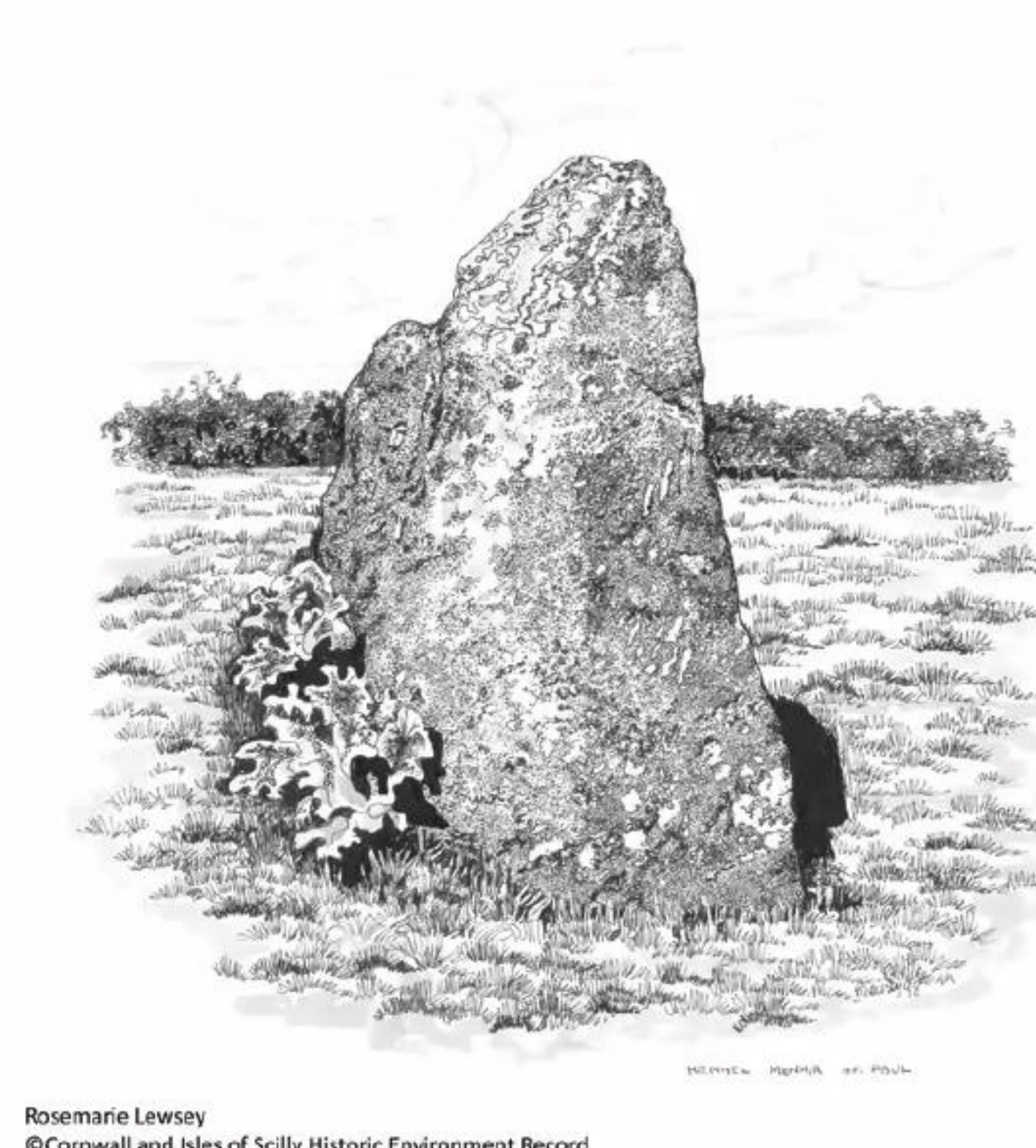
Since its inception in 2012, the Arches Heritage Data Management Platform has been deployed by heritage organisations around the globe.

To date, numerous organisations have implemented Arches both internationally and across the British Isles, including an expanding number of historic environment records (HERs). This has resulted in both progressively democratising access to historic environment information and enabling the public and specialist users alike to explore and use information about local communities and beyond.

HERs in the British Isles

Historic environment records (HERs) contain information about the historic environment for a defined geographic

Above and Right: Many important sites, such as Kemyel C, standing stone in Cornwall, are not protected as nationally significant monuments but are recorded in the local HER, in this case the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly HER



Rosemarie Lewsey
© Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record



area. In the British Isles, we are fortunate to have a network of more than a hundred HERs that provide complete coverage. Together, they hold millions of unique records about monuments, sites, and landscapes: From prehistoric standing stones to twentieth-century Cold War sites, from medieval churches to designed parks and urban spaces.

HERs play a vital role in forming public understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment; they provide information that underpins sustainable conservation, planning decisions, and land management, including forestry and farming schemes. In both England and Wales, the importance of HERs has been formally acknowledged through statutory protection.

HERs typically include records for monuments, alongside reference material that supports their identification and interpretation, referred to as source records. HERs also record activities that result in the collection of primary data about the historic environment: Event records include, for example, building surveys, archaeological excavation, and scientific surveys.

The painstaking, expert work to collate these diverse sources of information has been going on for more than 60 years. HER records are unique, making each one an irreplaceable resource: However, it is their dynamic character and link to

ROSEMARIE LEWSEY [2]

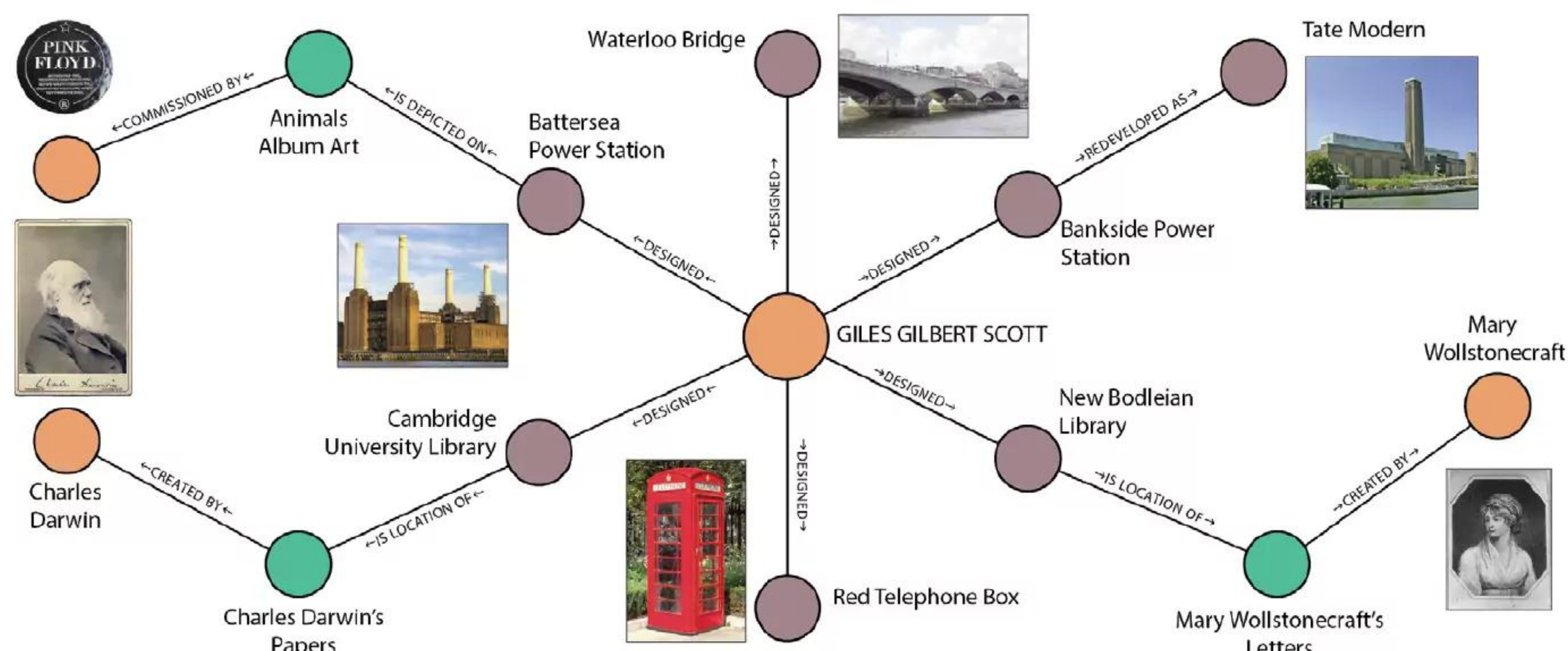
digital mapping that have given them salience in the twenty-first century.

HERs are constantly evolving, maintained by a dedicated community of historic environment professionals. Their scope and character continue to develop through research and investigation, each one reflecting the local circumstances in which they were created and have grown. While many are based in local authority planning departments, others are found in museums and universities.

HERs exist within a broader community of existing memory institutions, traditional holders of knowledge such as museums, archives, and libraries. They cross-reference datasets and resources, providing an index to the existence, quantity, and quality of these sources of information for the geographic area that they cover, including data and archives held elsewhere in the HER, or by other organisations.

Some HERs are very large: Kent, Cornwall, and Devon, for example, include more than 100,000 records each; others are much smaller, with a handful containing less than 4,000 records. Their variability extends to

Above: Arches users may visualise relationships between different data types and resources through an interactive graph. This example of such a graph shows relationships between architect Giles Gilbert Scott and buildings and structures he designed, as well as further related archival materials, artworks, and other persons



a role that is only set to become more urgent and important.

For more information see an online overview of HERs, past and present: <https://khub.net/web/uk-her-manual/home>

Why Arches?

HERs can reach their fullest potential through modern information technologies that offer quick access to key information, and a system that allows for records to update with ease to reflect changing conditions. However, maintenance of complex systems is costly and can be challenging for heritage organisations that face funding and staffing limitations.

In 2012, the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), and its original partner World Monuments Fund, recognised a long-term trend of diminishing resources for heritage organisations internationally, as well as the essential need for software that can accommodate the complexity, scale, and diversity of heritage data. With this in mind, the partners created the Arches Heritage Data Management Platform. At the inception of the Arches Project, the GCI engaged Historic England (then called English Heritage) to harness its expertise on heritage data standards, as well as heritage inventories, as input to the initial design of Arches.

Historic England has continued to provide technical guidance to the Arches Project since then. The needs and expertise of hundreds of heritage professionals from around the world have informed and guided Arches since the beginning of the project.

Arches is open-source software, enabling cultural heritage organisations worldwide to download it for free, customise it to their needs, and avoid

costly ongoing licensing fees. It should be noted that Arches is designed to be run by an organisation or a project team, rather than installed on personal computers.

Its development is guided by heritage professionals rather than large for-profit tech companies. While commercial solutions often lock organisations into contracts that give companies control over the software and data, Arches ensures heritage organisations retain full ownership and sovereignty over their system and information.

The open-source approach also engenders a collaborative environment for a community of implementers that have similar needs, providing an option for organisations to pool resources towards necessary software enhancements reflecting common needs.

Arches is purpose-built for heritage stakeholders

Data created and managed by heritage organisations is often complex (e.g. hundreds of artefacts excavated from an ancient settlement during multiple investigations by differing organisations), and contains uncertainty (e.g. date of establishment and abandonment of that ancient settlement).

Arches enables users to readily create and edit information representing both complexity and uncertainty, including tracking sophisticated relationships linking heritage items, events or activities, persons and organisations, and documents. Arches additionally allows implementers to customise controlled drop-down vocabularies, which supports both consistent data creation and indexing information for discovery through searching.

The core platform incorporates internationally adopted standards for



accessibility, particularly remote, digital access. Although many HERs can be accessed online, not all can.

Work is currently under way at local and national level to improve knowledge of and access to HERs for everyone: The public, researchers, volunteers, property owners, heritage professionals, and agencies. These innovations underpin the ability of HERs to respond to challenges such as the climate emergency and the need to streamline digital planning services.

They demonstrate their continued development and the pivotal role HERs play in the data ecosystem –

Above: HERs record activities ('events') such as building surveys, scientific surveys, and archaeological excavations; this example from Cambridgeshire HER shows archaeologists Kasia Gdaniec and Kerry Hopper discussing Must Farm Palaeochannel Investigations, Cambridgeshire

ESHER: East Sussex Historic Environment Record



Above: Landing page of Portico, the East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER), powered by Arches for HERs

In 2024, East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER) launched its internal version of the Arches for HERs application, called Portico. ESHER migrated over 35,000 records into the new platform relating to archaeological

discoveries, historic buildings, and other historical information. ESHER's main purpose is to help the County Council manage the historic environment of East Sussex and Brighton and Hove, enabling

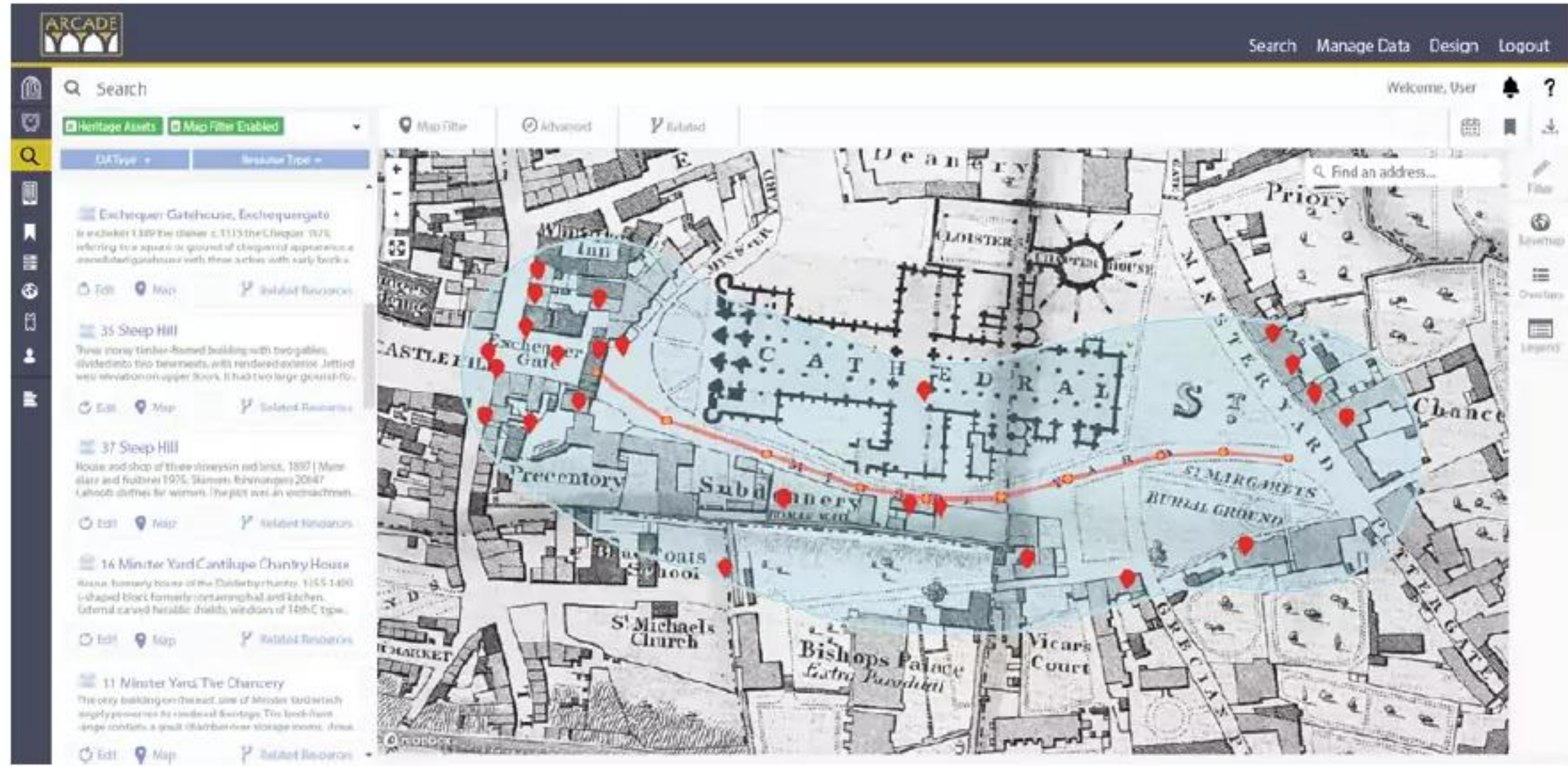
informed decisions on planning applications. Portico is also a valuable resource for academic and private researchers, local historians, and archaeologists. ESHER ultimately aims to launch public access to Portico.

both heritage information and information technologies. These standards facilitate robust data findability and usability, including widespread integration with other data management tools. Arches also uses common non-proprietary digital file formats to save the knowledge entered or migrated into the platform, producing data usable by other information systems and for the long-term. In these ways, Arches structures data to enable organisations to maintain the integrity of their heritage information into the future.

Arches is web browser-based to allow for broad access to anyone with an internet connection. Access, however, can be controlled at a detailed level based on individual or group privileges. An implementer can choose, for example, which users may edit which data or when public access is allowed, including what types of information may be viewed.

The interface is designed to be as intuitive as possible so that most users require minimal technical training. Through Arches' internationalisation, its user interface may also be readily

Below: Using the Location Filter in Arches, users can spatially query data by drawing a line or an area and specifying a buffer size, viewed here over an underlying 1842 base map. This search functionality may be used to identify heritage resources that would be impacted by proposed development projects in this example from the City of Lincoln Historic Environment Record (HER) deployment of Arches



and conservation activities, scientific or other scholarly reports, associated people, and organisations. Linking this information to dates or other temporal attributes allows visual time-based searches using the Arches Timewheel (see page 38). Arches also allows organisations to automate their business processes through customising task management workflows. For example, as described later in this article, Historic England personnel who manage the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER) deployment of Arches use a custom workflow to assess development applications and their potential impact on historic environment sites. Arches' capabilities are continuing to expand. The initial version of Arches for Science has been released, which is an extension of the platform designed to help heritage scientists and others to secure, retrieve, visualise, compare, and share scientific data, and to track technical examinations of heritage items. And, with expert input from Historic England, the development of Arches Lingo has begun, to provide organisations more control to integrate, combine, and manage their local vocabularies and thesauri, helping ensure consistency of data entry, and greatly improving search results.

Historic England's role in the Arches project

Historic England, the UK Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment, has a long involvement in the development of the Arches platform, as noted before.

Recognising the power and flexibility of the Arches software, Historic England has been keen to implement Arches to manage its own heritage inventory data. Currently, Arches is used to manage the National Record of the Historic Environment, a collection of over 550,000 records from the earliest times to the present day. Arches is also being implemented to manage and share information about the marine historic environment, including the National Marine Heritage Record (NMHR).

The NMHR covers sites that lie between mean high water and the 200 nautical mile sea limit, the tidal extent of rivers, estuaries, and creeks. It contains records for over 37,000 shipwrecks; of these, approximately only

6,000 are identified wreck sites, around 7,500 are unidentified seabed obstructions, and 1,000 isolated find spots.

Creating Arches for HERs for the UK historic environment sector

Seeing the potential of Arches, in November 2016, Historic England and the City of Lincoln came together with the Getty Conservation Institute to form a partnership to develop a new historic environment record system for both the City of Lincoln and Greater London using the Arches platform. A system which could be used by all historic environment records in the UK.

Arches for HERs

Arches for HERs is providing the sector with a twenty-first-century system that is data-driven and standard-based to support better decision-making and wider community engagement.

Being open-source and freely available, Historic England believes it to be a cost-effective alternative, one which can help limited local authority budgets spread a little further.

Users can find reliable information quickly, and online, making it easy for developers, consultants, and local authorities to identify potential risks or opportunities at an early stage, and facilitate community groups and others to better understand and love their local heritage.

Background to GLHER/GLAAS

The Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER) is not only one of the largest HERs in the UK, it covers the 33 boroughs that make up Greater London and has the unique distinction of being the only HER managed by Historic England.

It came into being in 1982, when the Historic Buildings Division of the then Greater London Council (GLC) set up the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record. Although one of the last to be set up, it was one of the first to consider recording information on both archaeology and historic buildings together, which is now standard practice.

Responsibility for the record passed, with the abolition of the GLC, to the Museum of London, but since the

early 1990s it has been maintained and managed by English Heritage/Historic England as part of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS).

The GLHER's primary use has been as a technical specialist dataset, helping inform planning and other land use management decisions across the capital, a diverse urban environment that experiences intense development pressure. Its potential to engage Londoners by raising awareness and enjoyment of the capital's heritage and its management had been held back by its inaccessible IT system.

The GLHER system contains nearly 100,000 records on the historic environment, or relating to information on the historic environment, and currently receives an average of 700 data requests a year, mostly from archaeological units and consultants as part of the planning system. The results of their research or excavations are then fed back into the GLHER system.

Why Historic England wanted Arches

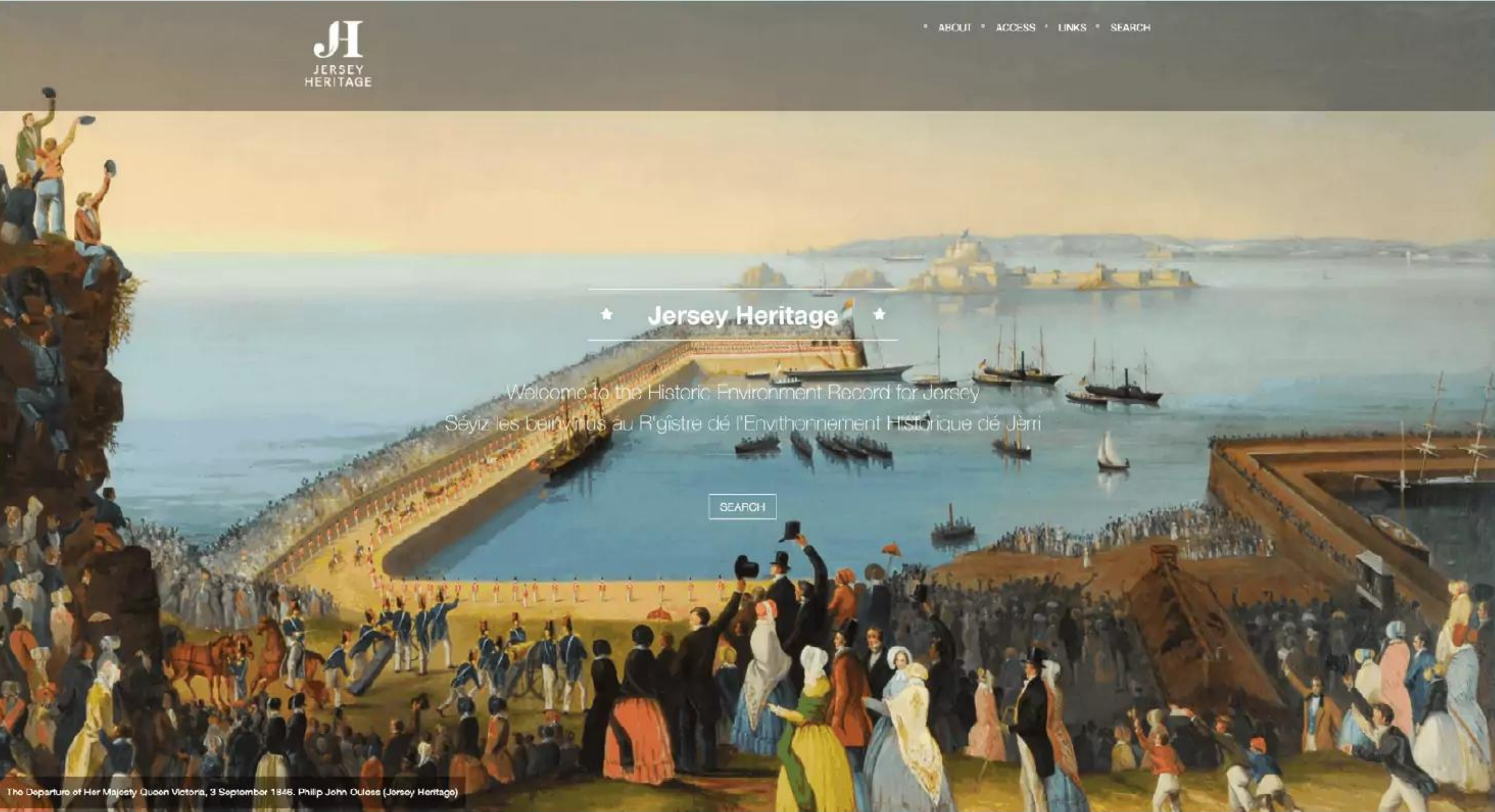
Given the high level of development in the capital, it is no surprise that the vast majority of external engagement with the GLHER has been through the planning system, namely developers and heritage contractors. However, the GLHER is an invaluable dataset for everyone, including academics and the public interested in London's heritage.

Public, or community-based, involvement is vital, not only with helping to develop the GLHER by making its content more accessible, but also through the planning system; to develop a further understanding and care of the historic environment, and to encourage more engagement in how public places and community spaces, are shaped in the future.

Enhancing the legacy of local societies, many of whom were integral to the input of early records, added to the GLHER in the 1980s. The system previously used by the GLHER operated under a licence scheme. This limited access to the HER, precluded extending its use across external partners, such as planners in the London boroughs, and restricted the number of potential volunteers the GLHER could host.

Prior access to the GLHER was limited, it meant either requesting an

Jersey Historic Environment Record



Above: Landing page of Jersey Historic Environment Record (HER), powered by Arches

In 2020 Jersey Heritage launched the first historic environment record for Jersey in the Channel Islands as an essential tool for researching its heritage and managing its future. The online historic environment record for Jersey is powered by Arches and

showcases the island's rich diversity of heritage places, ranging from historic buildings, landscapes, archaeological sites and finds, as well as historical maps and local folklore. Now, for the first time, comprehensive information about Jersey's heritage is publicly

accessible online providing a valuable research tool for members of the public, commercial entities, and researchers. The Jersey HER website includes a short video guide explaining how to carry out a variety of searches. <https://her.jerseyheritage.org/>

information download 'blind', making an appointment to visit the GLHER team and navigating an unfamiliar system, or relying on subsets of the GLHER data held on the Heritage Gateway or via the Archaeological Data Service's website.

Now, using the web-based Arches platform, users can view full live data populating the HERs, with only planning-related records restricted and sensitive sites withheld.

Having this resource means that heritage colleagues in the London planning authorities can directly view GLHER information to help inform decision making, rather than having to wait to get the information from the GLHER subsequently archaeological units and heritage consultants can begin to consider any heritage implications on planning related sites earlier, while waiting for the GLHER team to process their enquiry.

Internally, Arches has had a positive impact on GLAAS, helping to record information in ways that previously were unavailable. For example, the GLHER can process HER enquiries more efficiently and quickly, and GLAAS archaeological advisers use new built-in workflows to simplify and speed up their management of planning cases, so that site visit details, correspondence, and advice are all held in one place.

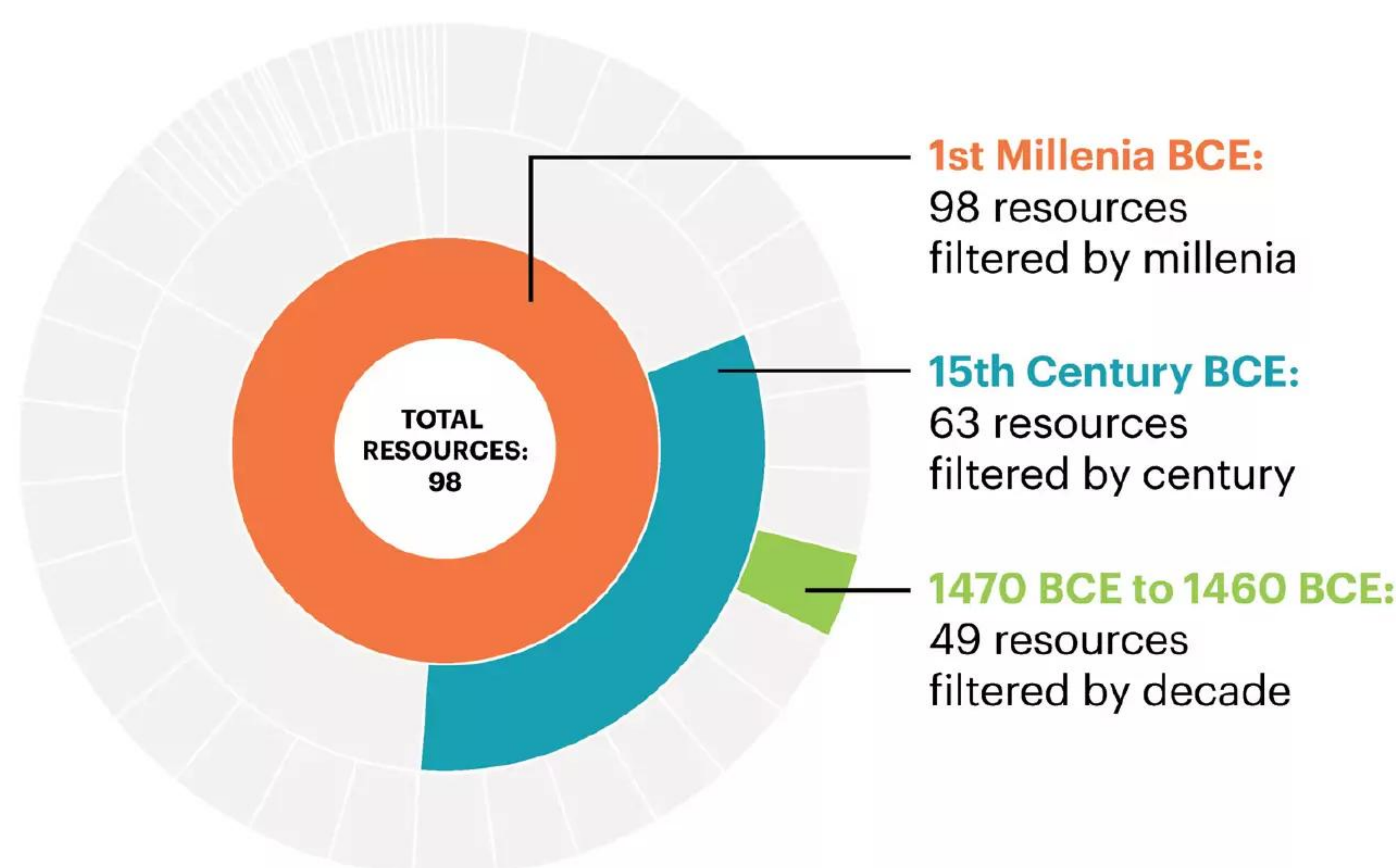
GLHER volunteers

Moving to an Arches-based system has also meant that the GLHER has been able to expand, a long-held ambition, to equip its team of volunteers in a cost-effective and convenient manner, allowing remote access to the system, either in the GLHER office or at home.

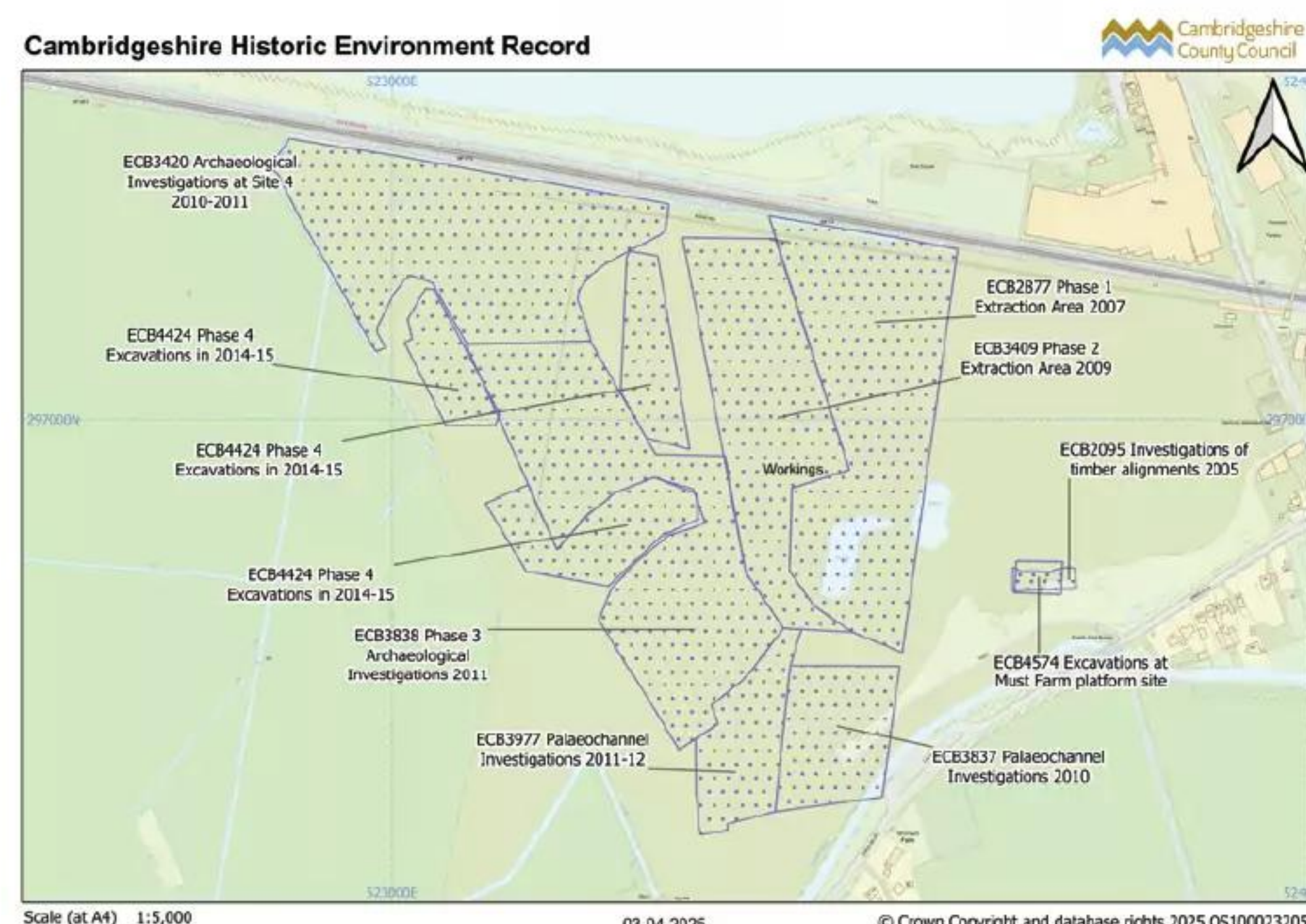
The GLHER has for many years welcomed volunteers, whether interested individuals, those seeking work experience in the heritage sector, or as part of an interest group.

Individuals work alongside the HER team, helping to enhance our HER data outside of the information received through the planning system. Workhouses, First World War auxiliary hospitals, sites, and finds along the foreshore in Wandsworth, and London squares are among the projects our volunteers have worked on.

Thanks to Arches, and the publicity of the launch of the GLHER online and Arches for HERs in September 2024, the GLHER now has nine volunteers and it is now looking to expand the team



Above: The Timewheel is a circular histogram allowing users to filter data based on a time period e.g., a millennium, century, or decade. The size of each time period segment represents the frequency that period appears in the data



Above right: HER volunteers from the Friends of Greenwich Park using the GLHER Online to update Park records

Above: Must Farm Palaeochannel Investigations, Whittlesey, are shown on Cambridgeshire HER GIS, alongside earlier and later phases at this internationally important site

further in 2025. By doing this, it emphasises the importance of involving a wider range of people and perspectives in researching London's heritage.

By empowering users, with the help of the GLHER team, to conduct their own research and analysis, the GLHER can encourage focus on areas of greatest interest to communities and embed local knowledge to create accessible records that appeal to a broader audience.

While it is fantastic that the GLHER is increasing its volunteer numbers, and will be looking to expand this group further, there is a capacity limit as the GLHER team needs to be able to both support and help our volunteers and still cover our extensive day-to-day work. This is something we are currently trialling with two of our volunteer groups.

London Parks and Gardens Trust

One of the GLHER's longer-term projects has been a collaboration with volunteers from the London Parks and Gardens Trust (LPGT) to import data from their inventory so that it is available to planners, developers, and local authorities, by adding it to the GLHER.

The inventory contains over 2,650 entries of parks and gardens which are not only thought to be of national importance but also includes smaller green spaces, which add to London's historic landscape and help improve community wellbeing.

This work involves additional research through records and mapping available through the GLHER, which in turn is fed back into the LPGT inventory. Mutually beneficial to both organisations, this work offers a dual purpose: Cleaning and updating the LPGT inventory records while sharing data to a wider audience alongside related heritage information through the online GLHER.

The Friends of Greenwich Park

The Friends of Greenwich Park are one of the new volunteer organisations the GLHER has engaged with since the launch of the new online HER. The Friends of Greenwich Park were formed in 1992 to help improve and conserve the park and have been involved in archaeological works which have taken place as part of the Royal Park's 'Greenwich Park Revealed' project.

Working with the GLHER team, the Friends have begun to review what

datasets the GLHER holds for Greenwich Park. Using their knowledge, and with further research, either independently or alongside the Royal Parks' community archaeologist, they are updating and adding information to the GLHER records.

Engagement with the voluntary sector allows the GLHER team to better understand the training needs of their volunteers and researchers. A salient reminder to the team that technical concepts HER Officers find easy to grasp, coupled with the breadth of content and recording standards, may feel challenging or overwhelming to others.

As a result, the team are looking at other ways to enable volunteers to add their work to the HER and better tailor work projects to support their needs; story records or thematic records which require less data recording and the ability to create bespoke workflows for users adding data to the HER, are just two features of Arches that will be explored, in addition to the inclusion of built-in help and an overhaul of the GLHER volunteer recording guide.

Arches in use in the British Isles

In addition to Historic England, numerous other heritage organisations and research institutions throughout the British Isles are working with Arches. The City of Lincoln Council was the first UK local authority to implement Arches as its HER database and is currently working to upgrade its platform to the new Arches for HERs application.

Where before, Lincoln's HER was running on an obsolete database that could only be accessed internally, Arcade, Lincoln's new heritage information and management platform is a fully online open access tool, allowing anyone in the world to use the council's heritage data to inform new development proposals, answer academic queries, or simply browse for pleasure.

For the council's own heritage team, Arches provides access to data entry and query from anywhere that has internet access, as well as a specially designed consultation system for recording professional advice when it is given to customers.

The open-source licence also enables access for as many trusted users as desired, allowing volunteers to contribute information to the database



Above: One of our Friends of Greenwich Park volunteers surveying the wall surrounding Greenwich Park

MANX NATIONAL HERITAGE

IOMHER: Isle of Man Historic Environment Record



Above: Landing page of Isle of Man Historic Environment Record, powered by Arches

Manx National Heritage, the charity responsible for the care and promotion of Isle of Man's natural and cultural heritage, launched the Arches-powered Isle of Man Historic Environment Record (IOMHER) in 2021. While IOMHER is

intended to improve cultural heritage management, it also provides online access for all to information and records relating to the Isle of Man's rich historic environment. Coverage ranges from data concerning the Island's

significant historic places, including archaeological sites and finds, landscapes and historic buildings, to underwater cultural sites and shipwrecks within Manx territorial waters.

The IOMHER website includes a video tutorial. <https://isleofmanher.im/>

(subject to verification), and for external groups to use the system to support their own projects, such as the ongoing city council's 'Local Listing' project.

Moving from the legacy database to an Arches-based system has, therefore, increased the productivity of the heritage team and opened up new opportunities for the local community to engage with their heritage.

Further roll-out of Arches is gaining momentum

Northern Ireland's Department for Communities' Historic Environment Division (HED) records, protects, conserves, and promotes Northern Ireland's historic environment. Since 2022, HED has been undertaking a digital transformation project to revolutionise how it manages records and to ensure the efficient and appropriate management of Northern Ireland's heritage.

HED is in the process of deploying a system using the Arches platform to

hold its heritage data, to develop bespoke workflows for HED's broad range of activity and to provide public access to data. HED is currently rolling out use of the system across internal users and it is anticipated that a publicly available version of the system will be available later in 2025.

In addition to being implemented by public agencies, Arches is being utilised by several UK-based research institutions for cultural heritage-related work, particularly with an archaeological focus, including University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, University College London, University of Southampton, Ulster University, and Oxford Brookes University.

This includes several projects supported by the Arcadia Fund, a London-based philanthropic foundation, to record endangered cultural heritage within more than 40 countries in the Global South. Each of these projects is implementing Arches employing a wide variety of languages and scripts.

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UK Arches community

Arches has a thriving online community made up of worldwide users, developers and service providers, set up to help with the direction of the development of Arches, but also to provide mutual support and encouragement.

Several support groups have been established. In the United States and the UK, regional user groups have been launched for heritage organisations and service providers either using, or having an interest in, Arches as a forum to share information and knowledge about developments in Arches and the range of projects being worked on.

The UK group meets once or twice a year and information about it can be found on the Arches Project website: <https://www.archesproject.org/user-group-uk/>. Additionally, with the launch of Arches for HERs, another UK group is being formed that is dedicated to UK HERs using Arches, to look at how to develop the system in the future.

Arches in use internationally

Looking more broadly than the British Isles, to date, Arches is being used by more than 100 organisations and projects around the world as a tool to identify, record, and publish online information about cultural heritage, and for uses including heritage management, protection, and research.

The known implementations to date collectively record more than one million cultural sites spanning five continents and nearly 60 countries. Beyond the British Isles, Arches deployments range from being focused on a national scale in countries such as Jamaica, Barbados, and Canada (now under preparation), a regional scale in British Columbia, Canada, Gansu Province, China, and the State of California (also under preparation), and a city-wide scale in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Auckland.

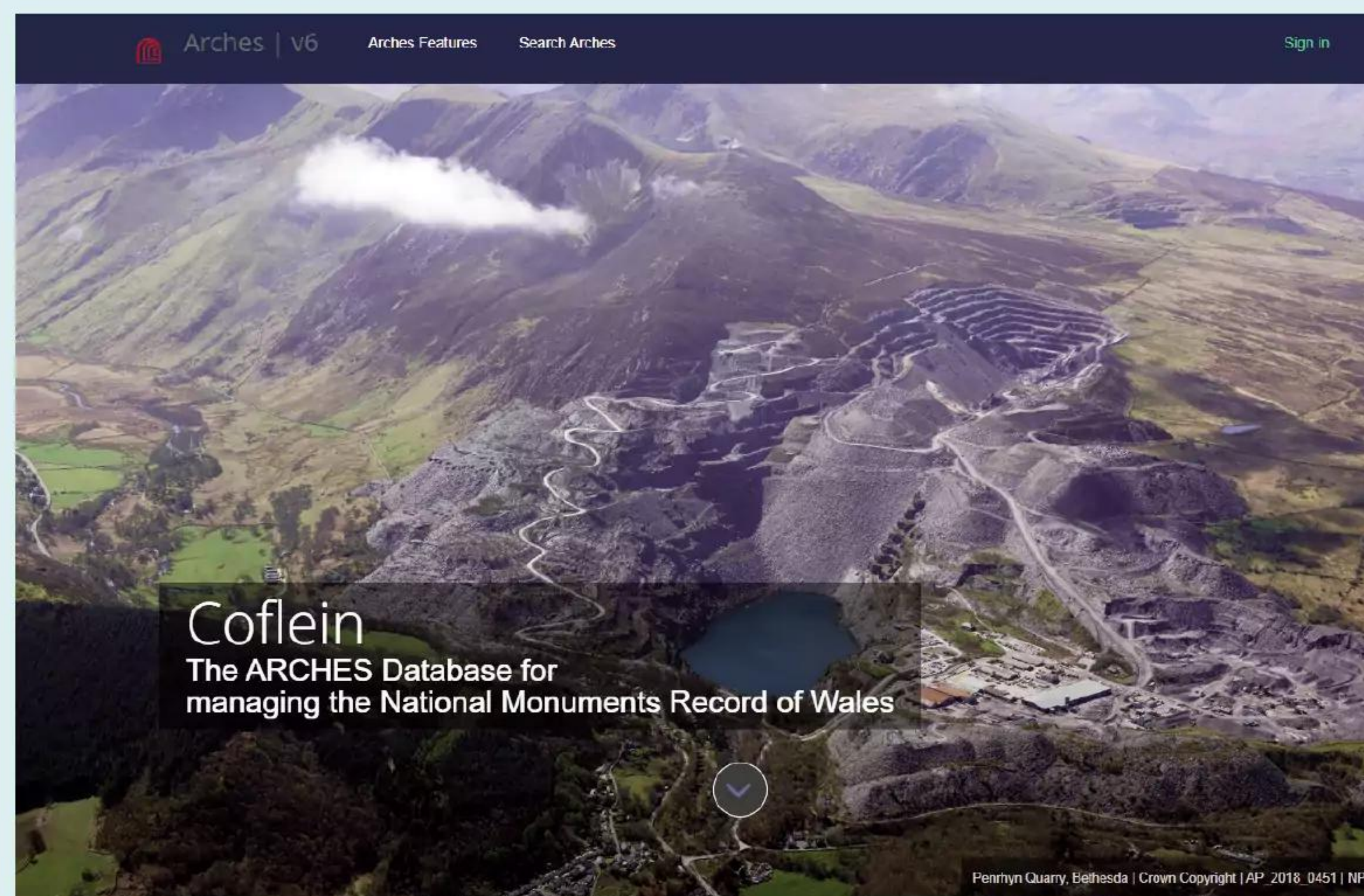
For further information on deployments of Arches around the world, visit: <https://www.archesproject.org/implementation-of-arches/webpage>.

Future of Arches and new possibilities for historic environment information

The numerous Arches deployments to date in the British Isles have provided a

Above: HERs contain many interesting and important local buildings, such as this example from Northumberland HER: a late nineteenth-century Rocket House formerly used for storing lifesaving equipment

Coflein



Above: Landing page for the Arches instance serving as an underlying database for Coflein, the Online Catalogue of Archaeology, Buildings, Industrial and Maritime Heritage in Wales

In 2021, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) started employing Arches to manage the geographical site index of the National Monuments Record of Wales.

The Commission has deployed Arches as one of the underlying platforms delivering data to Coflein.

The database holds digital images and archive references, and records archaeological and historical sites, monuments, buildings,

landscapes and other features relating to the historic environment of Wales. The Arches database currently holds over 120,000 records, created and managed by the RCAHMW, and made available to the public. <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/>



range of dividends. In cases such as Jersey and the Isle of Man, they have broken new ground as the first national online HERs, providing public access to consolidated, searchable historic environment information.

For the Greater London and the City of Lincoln's HERs, they have, for the first time, provided direct online and robustly searchable public access to information. Online, controlled access has also provided new means for authorised volunteer groups to

contribute information, extending the capabilities of public agency staff.

The availability of the Arches for HERs application also offers other UK HERs, and their constituencies, the potential to realise similar benefits, such as East Sussex's HER.

By developing Arches as an open-source software platform that can meet most institutions' needs, its implementation can free up limited resources for documenting and protecting cultural heritage, rather than being largely devoted to software development or proprietary software licences. Implementing organisations are also able to pool resources for its customisation and enhancement.

The modern, web-based information technologies provided through Arches are also democratising access to information to the public, providing sophisticated, yet intuitive, tools for exploring, discovering and, in some cases, contributing new historic environment information. ■

A Long View:

Archaeological societies, their legacy, mission and membership



With some county archaeological societies now celebrating beyond their 175th anniversaries, Dr Matt Pope, a trustee of The Sussex Archaeological Society and archaeologist from the UCL Institute of Archaeology, considers their future. How can these valuable organisations evolve a charitable agenda and effectively lead on positively impacting both society and the environment through the next century?

This year, The Sussex Archaeological Society (SAS) marks a century of guardianship over one of England's most iconic and enigmatic landscape features: The Long Man of Wilmington. Our relationship with the Long Man has been relatively uncomplicated – we have maintained our responsibility to the 72m-tall geoglyph by keeping the site fenced, vegetation under control, and the concrete blocks which mark its outline regularly painted white.

This stable and mutually satisfactory relationship has been occasionally

Above: The Long Man of Wilmington, an icon of The South Downs, the subject of much speculation and the source of huge inspiration. In the care of The Sussex Archaeological Society since 1925

interrupted, once by a Trinny and Susannah publicity stunt which saw the figure transformed into a feminine fashion icon, and at other times with various unauthorised additions, including a penis in 2010, and a face mask during the pandemic of 2020.

A more significant and legitimate intervention had to be made in 1940; fear that the icon might be used as a navigation mark by the Luftwaffe saw the bricks painted grass-green for the duration of the Second World War. But interruptions aside, the Society kept the

giant safe for a century, and one hundred May-mornings, when the Long Man Morris dancers form up in front of the giant, have come and gone under the Sussex skies.

SAS isn't unique as a county society in caring for heritage properties, but it does stand out for the number of properties it owns and cares for. In the 1920s, when legal protections for ancient monuments and buildings were poorly developed, organisations like SAS, perhaps taking their cue from the National Trust, had an active role in preserving important

monuments which might otherwise be at risk. The Duke of Devonshire's gift of the Long Man to the Society, which came with no endowment, shows how the Society was viewed at the time. Then in its 86th year, it was seen as a stable, responsible, and well-resourced guardian of the landmark figure.

The risk to heritage sites a century ago was very real. Beyond the *Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882*, the only significant legislation protecting the past at that time, very little protection existed beyond the awareness and disposition of the landowner. Organisations like SAS made it their business to try to advocate for the preservation of buildings and monuments at risk of demolition or damage from the plough, and so it was understandable that some of these societies were seen as safe havens for properties which were costly to maintain or had no use to their current owners.

In contrast to many county societies, the SAS purposefully focused on and expanded its mission to acquire and protect properties as a bulwark against their possible destruction in the poorly regulated heritage environment of the early to mid-twentieth century.

After leasing Lewes Castle from the Stanford family in 1850, the family eventually gifted it to the Society in 1922. In 1923, another Lewes property, Anne of Cleves House, was donated to the Society through the generosity of Frank Verral. In 1925, the medieval building of Marlipins in Shoreham-by-Sea was secured for the Society by public subscription – 2025 marks its centenary with the Society.

The Priest House, West Hoathly, was donated in 1935 by John Godwin-King and, a year later, Thomas Paine's Lewes residence, Bull House, was gifted by John Every. In the post-war era, perhaps as national protections and awareness over the value of historic properties grew, so did the rate at which the Society acquired properties. Two notable additions were the buildings and grounds of Michelham Priory, gifted by Stella Hotblack in 1959, and the site of the newly discovered Fishbourne Roman Palace, bought for the Society by its benefactor Ivan Margary.

By the 1980s the Society owned more than 12 properties, from medieval priories to a Roman Palace, including a mysterious hill figure. Through all the uncertainty of the interwar years and white-heat of post-war redevelopment, the Society kept these properties safe even though the Society has not

consistently thrived and, in recent years, has struggled.

Thankfully, the legal framework through which heritage is protected under law has undergone significant transformation and expansion since 1925. Heritage is now protected by a wider range of laws and planning frameworks. These include an updated, but still imperfect, *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act* and the *National Planning Policy Framework of 2012*, which replaced the earlier PPS5 and PPG16.

Of course, all of this might mean very little to the Long Man, who has seen many laws and administrations come and go. For now, the Long Man can look to its responsible owners more than any wider law for its comfort and safety. While we

starved local authorities. Front-line services are poorly resourced, traditional funding models are inadequate, and neither philanthropy nor 'The Big Society' has yet come to the rescue.

However impassively, the Long Man bears witness to our current struggles, as he has in many more serious periods of turmoil before. Whatever reassurance that perspective might offer, it shouldn't detract from the present reality that, a quarter of the way into the twenty-first century, so much that we have built to keep heritage safe is under threat. We have a moment now to decide what being interested in the past means in terms of current action and whether being a member of an organisation like the CBA, English Heritage, the National Trust, or a



Above: Our head gardener, James Neal, regularly leads groups of volunteers to repaint the bricks that make up the form of The Long Man. This is one of the simpler properties to maintain

try to keep the hill figure safe and stable, the environment SAS continues to navigate is anything but. While its role in heritage protection was once clear and immediate, and seemingly it could acquire any property of note at threat, that role is neither necessary nor sustainable in the present day.

Beyond this single issue, the protection of heritage sites, much else has changed around SAS and other similar organisations. A century on from acquiring the Long Man, maintaining the organisations that protect the past on behalf of wider society is rapidly becoming an issue. A quick survey of national heritage organisations shows that many are impacted by unsustainable levels of income, changing membership patterns, or rising costs. These struggles now take place against the background of a wider cost-of-living challenge and cash-

county archaeological society is about what we get from that membership, or how it allows us to serve as an active participant in the challenges we face.

I think 2025 is the right time to ask why, amid all that we face in the current world, we should consider membership of national or county organisations. It is also the right time to ask what role we expect these organisations to play in the future protection of our heritage in exchange for our support, and to consider what we are prepared to give to help them achieve their aims.

Reconnecting archaeological organisations to the heritage environment

I have been a member of SAS since I was a teenager and trustee since 2018. I was attracted to it as a portal to the exciting

and arcane learned world I knew existed beyond my comprehensive school and to which I was drawn. My very reasonable student membership fee equipped me with a subscription to the society's academic journal, *The Sussex Archaeological Collections*, access to its library at Barbican House, free entry to all of its properties and discounted fees for its annual conferences.

While university lay way off in the future for me, in the present, the society offered a way of entering the spheres and networks of history and archaeology in the county, as well as those that lay beyond. I didn't realise at the time that the 'archaeology' at the centre of the Society's remit was the antiquated meaning of the term at its inception in 1846, covering prehistory, the ancient world, and all historical periods, through documents, maps, genealogy, heraldry, and folklore. The subject at the heart of the Society was heritage, in all its forms, as it manifested in, or was connected to, the historic county of Sussex. This was the purpose for which SAS, alongside many other county societies were formed.

Its original aims were to broaden and deepen our understanding of the county's past and, through the establishment of a museum and a journal, protect and share discoveries made in Sussex. In these ways, it shares much of its history and origins with other county societies which arose then and since, many of which thankfully survive and thrive through to today.

While some developed as more general learned societies, including within their

Below: In addition to buildings and landscape, The Sussex Archaeological Society curates over a million artefacts, artworks, documents, and photographs. Keeping these objects safe requires skill and investment. Here is a fragment of a human figure from Fishbourne Roman Palace, which could represent the Emperor Nero as a child

range of interest a broader remit of natural history, some had trajectories which saw them focus increasingly on archaeology as we understand it today.

In some societies, their activities increasingly focused on organising excavations (to varying standards) across the country. And some of these societies concentrated just as diligently on publishing the results of their excavations, too.

In Sussex, we have always been lucky to have many esteemed historians at the heart of the county Society. They have done so much to build its reputation and renown for academic integrity. But there have been times they have had to work hard and shout loudly to remind those within and without the society of the broad definition of the term 'archaeology' within our name.

This fact, alongside the industrious levels of excavation carried out by other local archaeological groups in the county, have helped to keep the aims of the Society uncoupled from the drive to dig holes in the ground. Many great, and not so great, Sussex archaeologists have been members of the Society but most significant excavations in the county during the last 179 years have been carried out by other organisations.

I would have had little interest in devoting my spare time being a trustee of an archaeological society focused on its own excavations. At a time when museum stores are closing and threats to the archaeological record are increasing, I think a case could be argued for a

moratorium on all non-essential excavation.

I was encouraged to go beyond passive membership to very active engagement because the Society was so much more than a local archaeology group. It is a heritage organisation with a deep heritage of its own. In the present, it was the role the Society is playing in curating and publishing the results of excavations, alongside historical research, and providing a focus for the sharing of discourse and news, that was so valuable.

For the future, I was excited about what organisations like SAS could be, and how they could work with others to mobilise and advocate for heritage. Since taking up a role as a Trustee and having to daily consider balancing the wide-ranging expectations of our membership with our responsibilities to staff, collections, and properties, I've been constantly asking myself the same questions: How should each of us individually, or as members of heritage organisations, take responsibility for the past? How can we balance our engagement of people with our shared past through membership of our organisations? How can we foster a spirit of campaigning advocacy that can empower members to become positive activists for the past and its value in the present?

Balancing priorities

Now, the Long Man gazes out over a very different world. While planning protections remain in place and heritage protection laws are enforced, our hill figure and other properties remain safe. The urgency with which safe hands were sought a century ago into which these treasured sites could be placed is no longer there, and indeed the Society has sold properties since the 1980s knowing they will have protections today that were unavailable at the time they were originally acquired.

In some ways, the relationship between SAS and its properties has changed: It is now more complex and carefully balanced. The SAS continues to provide protection, maintenance, and access to the properties, while the properties contribute to the life of the Society as venues to engage the public, attract membership, interpret the past, educate children and adults, and hold events celebrating our shared past in the county.

Owning and caring for properties comes with expensive and demanding



liabilities, but these are balanced by the immediate relevancy and engagement that opening historic properties to the public brings, enabling participation in community and civic life at the hyper-local, county, and national scale.

As with many organisations, the situation is not comfortable at all: As 15 years of austerity, the cost-of-living crisis, and the impact of Covid have pushed the sustainability of the organisation to the limit and there have been regrettable job losses and reductions in operating capacity during the past few years as a sustainable way forward is sought.

Our community of staff and volunteers, like the wider museum and heritage sector, have had to endure much change and uncertainty, but the SAS and its properties remain. In a heritage landscape, where museums are forced to close their doors, and heritage engagement teams are downsized or disbanded, the Society is fighting to find a future that can work for its properties, collections, members, volunteers, and staff. What is at stake in our organisation, like so many others, is not just the legacy of so many decades of generous support and considered curation of the past, but also the potential for heritage bodies to survive and evolve towards a more sustainable future.

Our commitment to the past in the form of the fabric of buildings and the proper care of collections is clear, but it does not seem, nationally, that there is the will or resource to provide enough of that care, from national or local government funding.

This not only means that independent heritage organisations cannot easily access core running costs from public funding, but we are seeing heritage organisations, museums, and historic properties that were once run by local authorities devolve to independent trusts, if not close altogether. One of the most high-profile examples of this process was the transformation, in 2015, of English Heritage from a public body to a self-financing charity expected to care for, open, and interpret over 400 historic and archaeological sites owned by the government. The move sent a clear signal: That heritage was to broadly survive on a membership and charity model, and that voluntary payments from individual members of the public would be the main source of funding for the sector.

For museums and historic properties, this has meant a renewed and imperative

Right: Providing ways to enjoy and understand our shared past is at the core of so many heritage organisations and archaeological societies. One of the biggest intergenerational challenges we face is ensuring young people will inherit a resilient, inclusive and well-resourced heritage sector



THE SUSSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

focus on developing support from wider society, from engaged community activity to establishing patron schemes, and attracting significant donations. For archaeological societies such as the Society, but also national membership organisations like the Council for British Archaeology, it has meant a reconsideration of role and direction.

If we are to develop a successful programme of engagement with wider society that translates into passionate volunteer support, widespread goodwill, and sustainable funding we need to really understand how we can most effectively engage with people's hearts and make meaningful and visible real-world transformations. I personally feel this can neither be a call just to save organisations themselves, which can end up being a hollow, self-regarding path, nor a pay-to-participate model where activities simply sustain the organisation or membership is considered wholly transactional.

Successful charities have well-articulated aims and objectives, they clearly demonstrate how their work improves the world and takes an active part in moving towards a better future. Successful charities attract members and volunteers, not just because of what that engagement brings for the participants, however important this is. They go further by inspiring a connection with a greater purpose, seeing that relationship bring improvement to wider society and the environment.

This is where we need to put our focus if we are to survive and thrive as a sector, aligning the conversation around archaeology and archaeological societies with a clear spirit of advocacy and campaigning. We need to move the dial from membership of an archaeological

society being about the opportunity to dig, or to engage with objects. We need to redirect the national conversation away from the value of treasure and move the heritage protection debate away from exceptional cases like the Stonehenge tunnel debate, to general national principles and practices.

Instead, we need to rapidly evolve towards developing a more strategic focus that campaigns for the positive impact archaeology can have on both the individual and communities, that sees archaeology as part of the environment, not a collection of things, that values heritage and campaigns for its protection and proper funding wherever it is under threat. To do this we need to articulate what is at stake and that means not only focusing on what is being lost in the present, in terms of expertise and properties, but also a wider understanding of what it took to build our heritage environment in the first place.

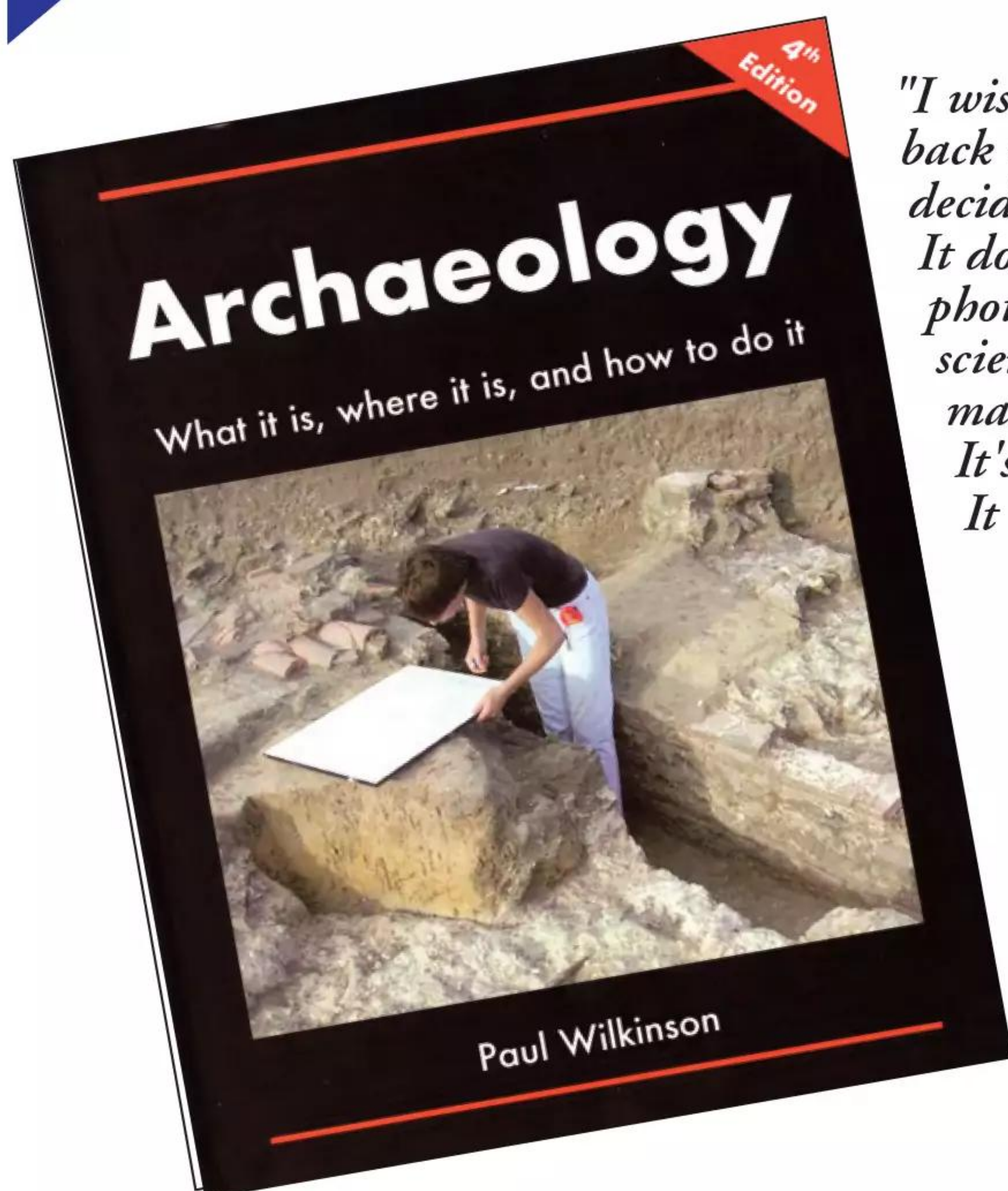
Reigniting support for the sector will mean explaining and understanding its history. Retracing the steps, showing us how individual generosity alongside collective commitment and campaigning built our museums, put in place heritage protection laws, established the system of County Archaeologists and contracting units, and widened participation in the archaeological process.

The thousands of people who currently make up the memberships of archaeological societies and other national heritage organisations in the country are already doing something significant and powerful with their commitment to the sector, whether through their fees, donation, or their time. But I do feel we are missing something if we do not engage together

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fully as advocates for the sector, if we do not actively communicate when a timely letter to their democratically elected officials, or approaches to local authorities, can make an impact and show leadership where we need their voice, their signature, and sometimes their presence, to passionately stand up for the protection of the historic environment and archaeological record.

The future of the archaeological society in Britain

If we are to rally around a new idea of what it means to be members of a local, county archaeological society we need to start now by understanding, at a national level, what motivates people to join a group. We need to understand the composition of membership, in terms of demographics and diversity, and we should be honest in considering how many groups might survive without an increase in younger members.

At a local level, the desire to take part in excavations is still a huge draw but is also an unregulated space in which it is sometimes unclear why it has to take place, whether there is capacity at any local museum to take excavated material, or if there is the funding and expertise in place to bring the work to publication. Moving to a place where memberships are primarily about supporting the archaeological environment, rather than taking part in archaeological excavations, may require some frank and uncomfortable conversations.

Can we be responsible advocates for the past while engaging in poorly funded excavation? Do we understand that a dig is wholly a destructive activity, destroying the integrity of the past, and that can only be mitigated by extensive and timely publishing? Do we really know what we are going to do with the hundreds of

sheds, outbuildings, boxes, and crates full of artefacts from local society excavations for which there is no museum space?

There is a future where local societies have successfully advocated for well-resourced museum storage, support for County Archaeologists in planning departments, and engagement with professional archaeologists to create a sustainable environment that allows for high-quality community excavation.

Establishing the need to excavate is key: Is the site under threat? Does the research align with regional or national frameworks? Do we have a clear framework for bringing wider communities into the project? Where answers to these questions are established, a publication programme can be guaranteed, and capacity for storage is in place, then a local society can reassure itself that it has helped create a healthy local heritage environment and excavation can responsibly take place.

Sustainable excavation is about so much more than funding, it's about ensuring it occurs in a functional and healthy heritage ecosystem, and making this happen is where we should be putting our energy.

This is a time to join organisations, to get involved, and to ask them what you can do to support their mission. Britain is by no means short of heritage and archaeological organisations you can join, but this extensive range of choice is confusing: Which bodies set standards? Which set wages? Which are engaged in advocacy? Which engage with the DCMS and parliament?

Taking time to research the role and remit of organisations like the Council for British Archaeology (CBA), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, The Royal Archaeological Institute, Rescue, or the Society of Antiquaries is as valuable as taking the time to understand the planning process and the current challenges in funding.

Where one puts financial support in joining any of these organisations is an important decision. And I wish the decision was as clear for us as it seems to be when deciding to support a wildlife charity or an organisation like the CPRE: Clear voices; clear missions; and a clear understanding that I am supporting change in the wider world.

Local and county archaeological societies needn't wait for a lead from national organisations on this, they are sometimes well-connected and agile

enough to become very effective advocates and campaigners for local, regional, and national issues. For us, at SAS, we can play this role more effectively in the future. We protect our collections of artefacts, properties, and support our staff and volunteers because we know their value, and quite simply because no one else will. The future will be working alongside national organisations like the CBA as well as the communities of Sussex to develop change in the wider world.

But until we find our collective voice as advocates for the past, I fear we will struggle. Let us learn to translate our individual concern into a visible movement, one that will attract passionate people from across society and funding.

The Long Man looks out over a beautiful and sunny spring Sussex landscape, just as the cuckoos have returned to the Weald. The Giant came to our society without an endowment, he was put in trust to us, to protect him for an indefinite time, for the benefit of all.

Often, during challenging times as a trustee of this organisation, I think of this iconic figure, or the great medieval keep at Lewes Castle or the mosaics at Fishbourne Roman Palace, and know I am doing my bit to ensure they are there for the future to value and protect in turn.

So much of having a vocation in heritage is about passing it all on – passing on objects, places, knowledge, ideas, and skills; this is an intergenerational endeavour we can all participate in. However hard the headwind, I believe we can continue to pass on these fragile embers of the past.

Humans are innately cultural creatures, we curate, we pass on, keeping knowledge and understanding alight. In this way, archaeological societies can play a pivotal role in the transfer of our shared cultural and environmental inheritance. But this will be far less of a struggle if we amplify positivity and clarity, finding a way to fan these fragile embers into a strong, powerful flame, and work together to meet precarity with solidarity and passion.

The Sussex Archaeological Society was established in 1846 and continues today as a registered charity, accredited museum organisation, and affiliate of the Council for British Archaeology. ■

For more details or to join visit:

<https://sussexpast.co.uk/the-history-of-the-sussex-archaeological-society/>

“A Cro-Magnon Painter Sells a Masterpiece”: Cave art in prehistoric cartoons from Punch

For over a century, comic depictions of prehistoric people and their art have been drawn to amuse and entertain. Greg Michaelson gives us a wry tour of Punch cartoonists' long love affair with prehistoric pictures.

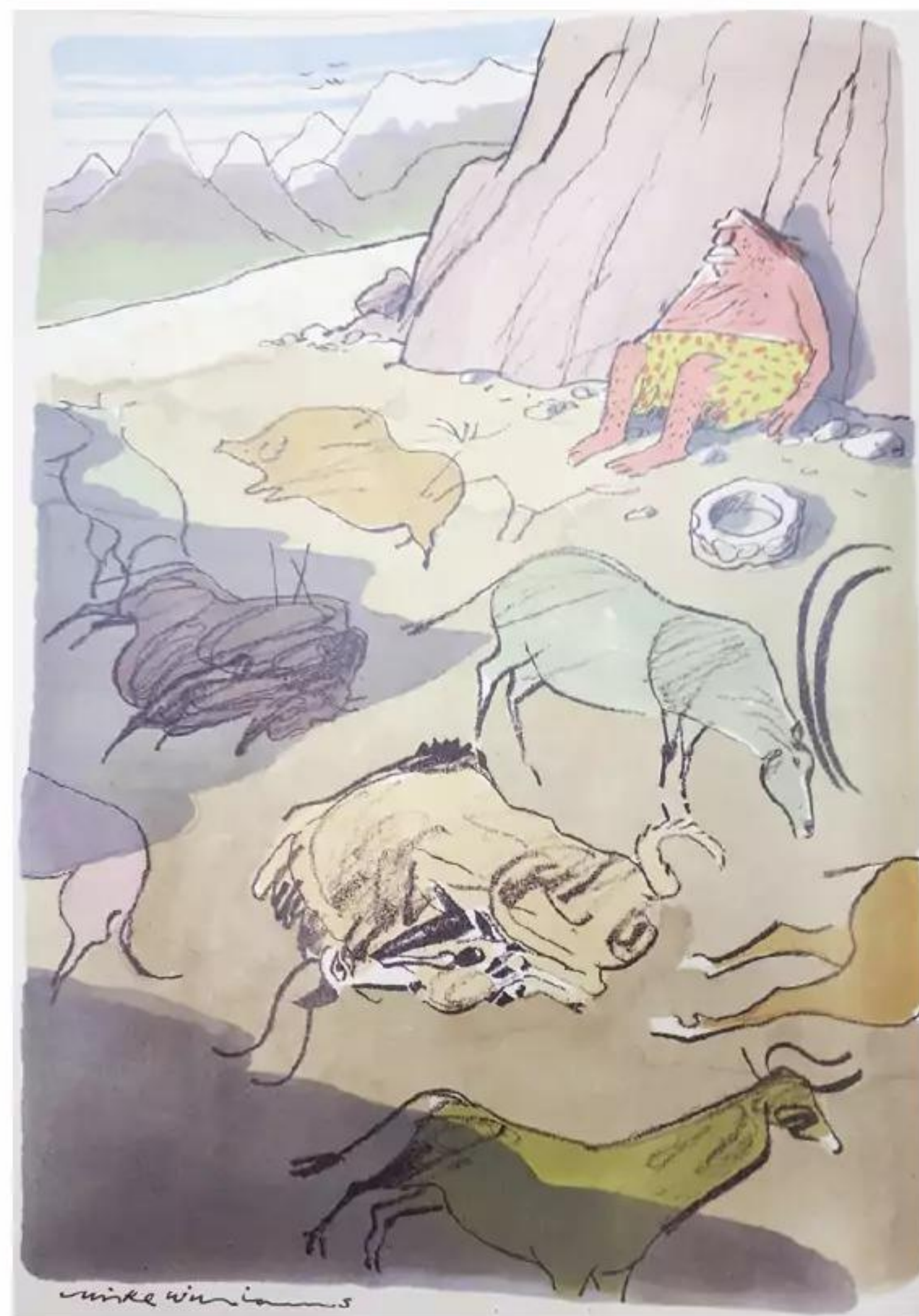
Prehistoric settings have been a favourite for cartoonists since ET Reed's Prehistoric Peeps first appeared in the British humorous magazine *Punch* in 1893. Reed is widely thought to have originated the Flintstones-style of cartoon, that shows modern lives projected back into the deep past. His stereotypes for 'cavemen' have certainly proved long lasting: European, mostly male, with hair as shaggy as their fur clothes, wielding gnarly clubs or hafted stone axes. Yet, many prehistoric cartoons show folk much like us, making their way in a puzzling world.

While prehistoric cartoons often play on well-worn settings – hunting, cave life, the discovery of fire, or the invention of the wheel – cartoonists have a long-standing affection for parietal art and its artists. Indeed, of the 455 prehistoric cartoons that I've

Right: Figure 1: M. Williams, Punch, Volume 299, 31st August 1990, p12

Far right, top: Figure 2. Prehistoric Peeps. A Visit to an Artist's Studio. ET Reed, Punch, Volume 106, 1894, p51

Far right, bottom: Figure 3. Prehistoric Peeps. Opening of the Primeval Royal Academy. ET Reed, Punch, Volume 106, 1894, p226

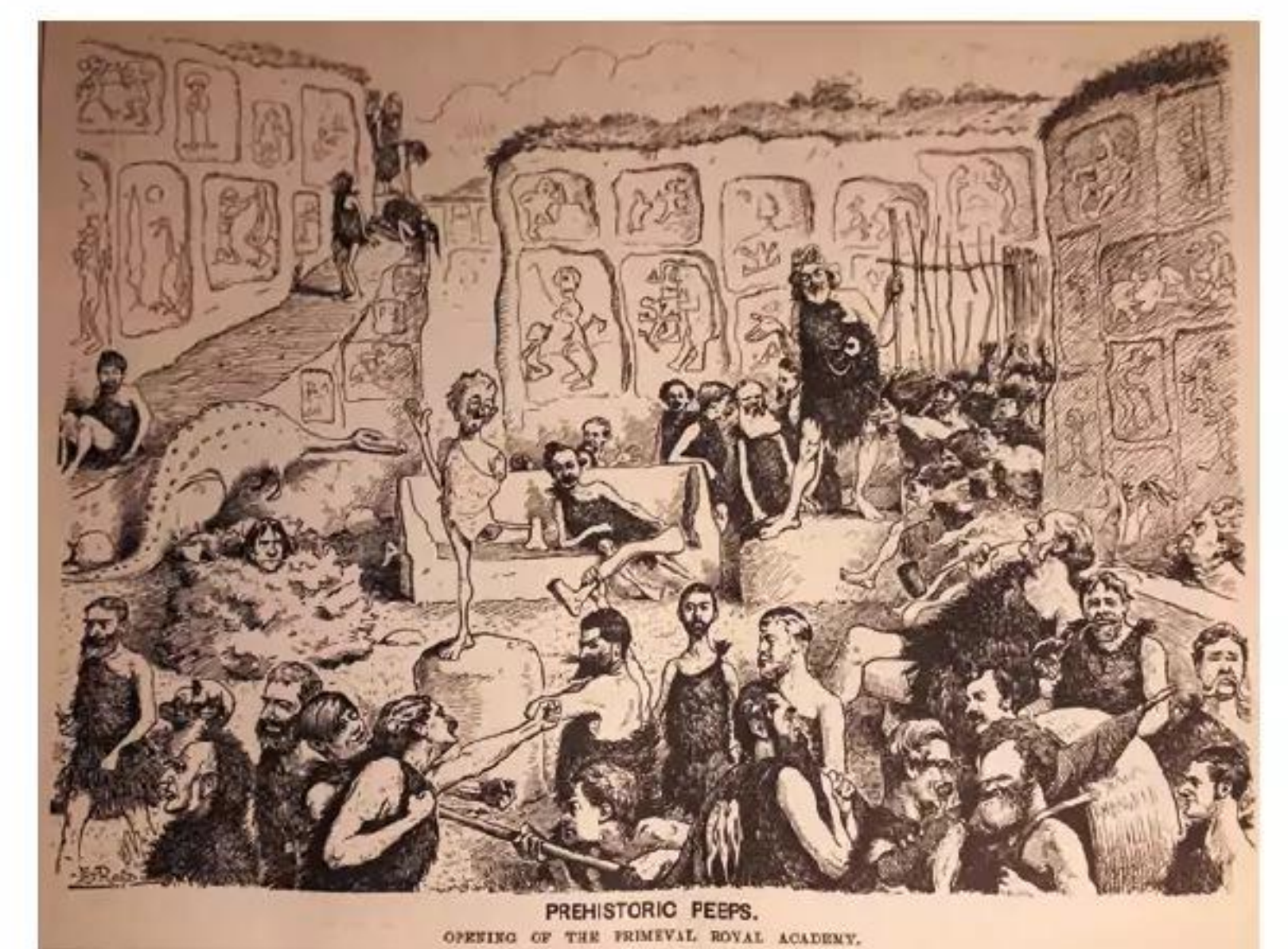
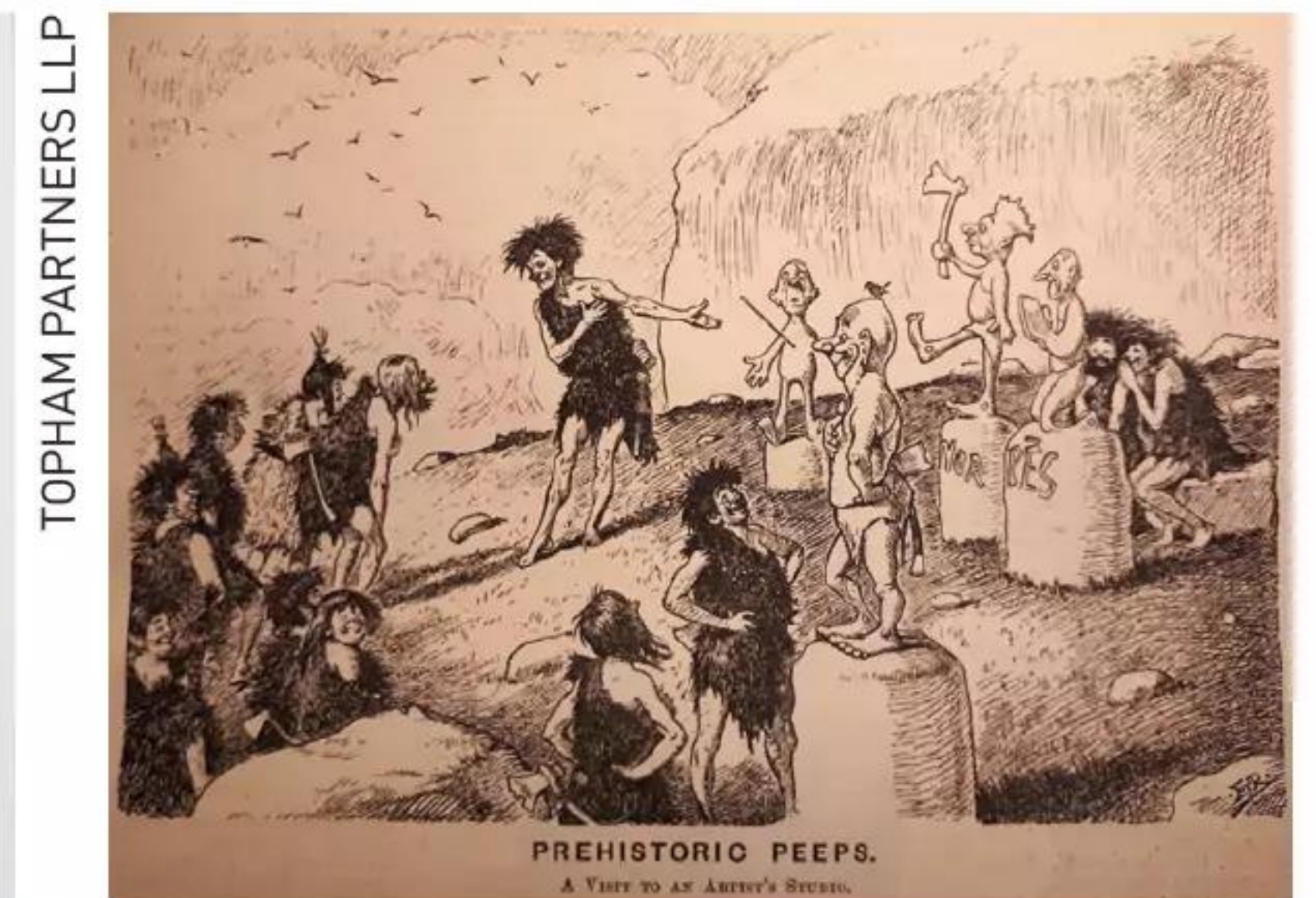


found in *Punch*, published between 1880 and 2002, 62 involve cave art.

This article explores the treatment of cave art in prehistoric cartoons, which shows surprisingly little connection with the many theories on its original purpose.

Prehistoric pavement art

Mike Williams' cartoon from 1990, shown in Figure 1, is reminiscent of contemporary pavement artists in



tourist traps, displaying detailed copies of 'old masters', like the Mona Lisa, the Girl with a Pearl Earring, or The Birth of Venus. Here, the pavement artist, snoozing in the sunshine, has drawn faithful copies of cave art from Upper Palaeolithic sites in southwest Europe, including a bison from Altamira, and a reindeer and ox from Font de Gaume. The loving reproduction of these Ice

Age icons stands out from the sketchy feel of the rest of the cartoon. It is striking that the images are immediately recognisable as cave art, just as the artist is immediately recognisable as a caveman. So how did such images gain their iconic status?

In the beginning

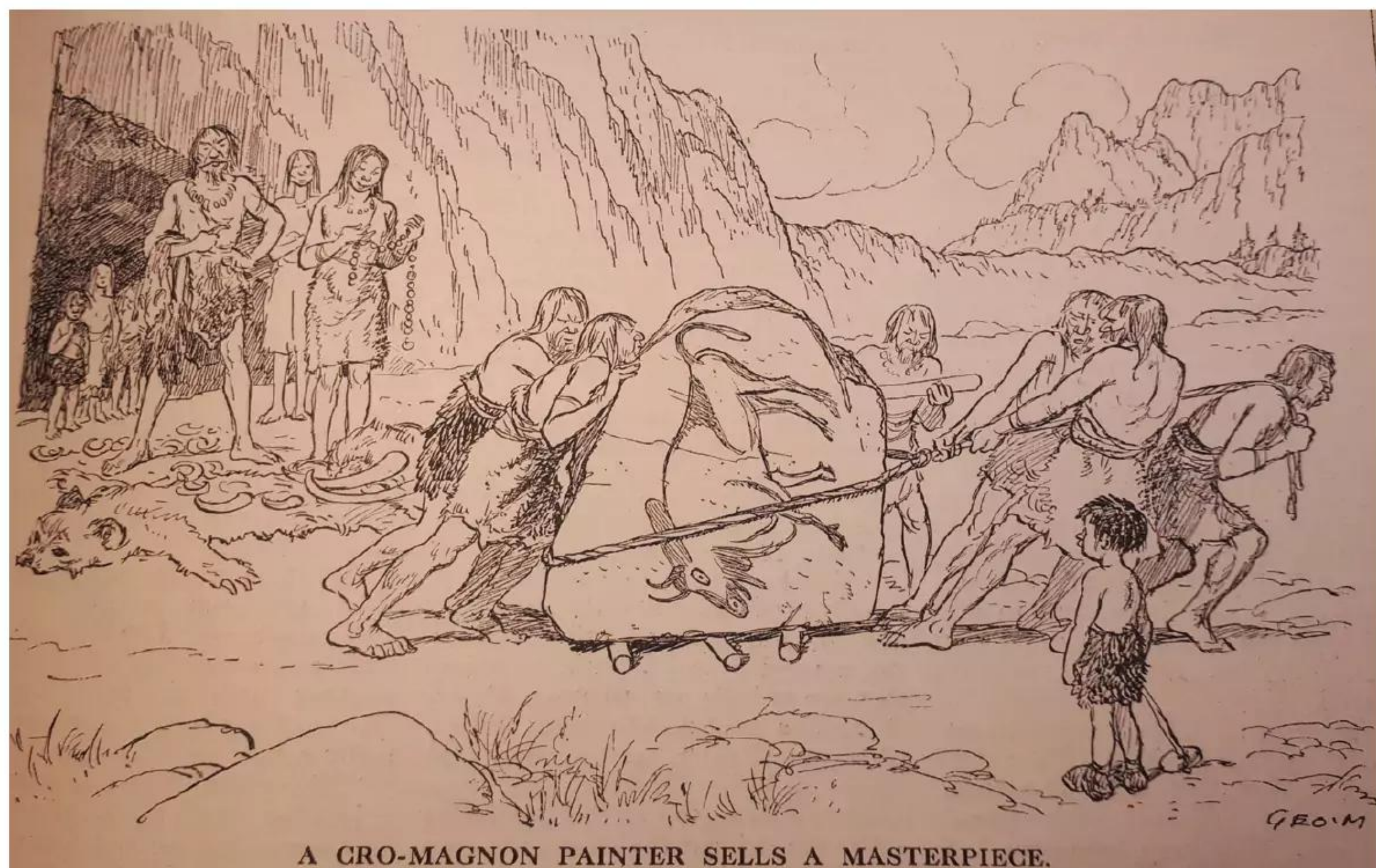
The best-known figurative cave art, and the one most frequently seen in *Punch* cartoons, comes from the Later Upper Palaeolithic in western Europe, towards the end of the Last Glacial Period, roughly 30,000 to 10,000 years ago. There is considerable uncertainty about dating, classification, and regional groupings.

Here, it's enough to distinguish northern Spanish and southwestern French art (Gravettian, Solutrean, Magdalenian) from southern Spanish/north African art (Levantine, Capsian). As a rough rule of thumb, while both show big beasts, Levantine art may also have people.

The Altamira cave paintings in northern Spain were discovered in 1879 by María Sanz de Sautuola, then eight-years-old. Her father, Marcelino, with Juan Vilanova y Piera, carried out the subsequent excavations and published the results in 1880. However, there was considerable scepticism about the paintings' ages and origins, in particular from the French specialists Gabriel de Mortillet and Émile Cartailhac.

In the later nineteenth century, archaeology was still a very young discipline. 'Deep Time' understandings of the past were slow to gain acceptance, and Darwin's *Origin of Species*, published in 1859, was still controversial.

Right: Figure 5:
A Cro-Magnon Painter Sells a Masterpiece. G. Morrow, *Punch*, Volume 184, 1933, p103



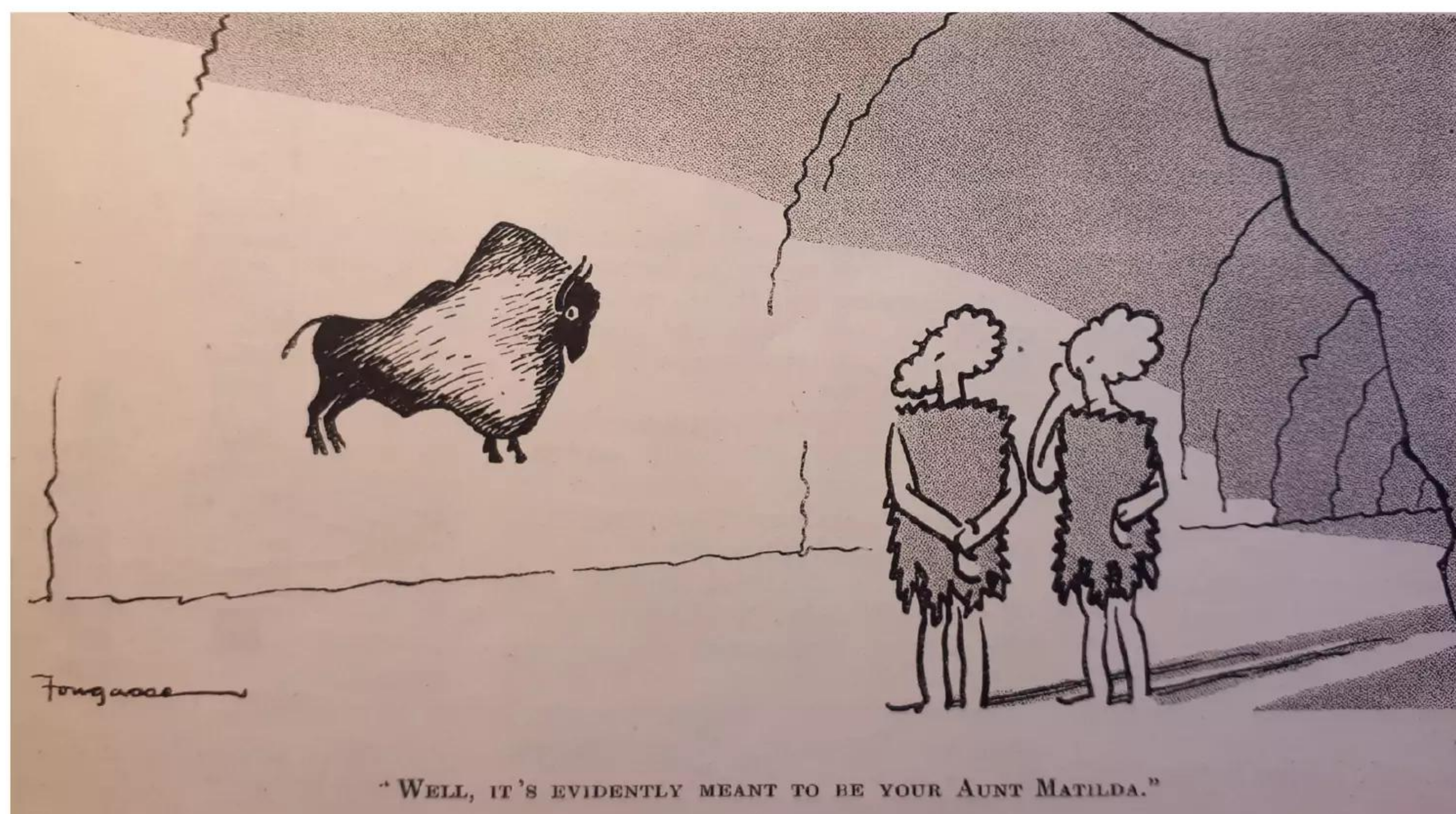
Right: Figure 4:
The Great "Servant Difficulty". E.T. Reed, *Punch*, Volume 113, 1897, p154



Right: Figure 7:
E. Norfield, Punch, Volume 199, 1940, p106



Below: Figure 6:
"Well, it's evidently meant to be your Aunt Matilda." Fougasse, *Punch*, Volume 192, 1937, p573



Very little evidence of prehistoric material culture beyond stone implements had been found, so models were based on unreliable and prejudiced accounts of supposedly primitive lithics-using peoples, like the Andaman Islanders, Tierra del Fuegians, Tasmanians, and Australian Aborigines. These were deemed incapable of making art, so it was unthinkable that prehistoric people could have produced work as fine as at Altamira, which gained little wider publicity.

Prehistoric Peeps art

Edward Tennyson Reed (1860-1933) was an English artist, who moved in the same circles as the Pre-Raphaelite painter Edward Burne-Jones. Reed feigned ignorance of prehistory, and his Prehistoric Peeps were almost entirely whimsical. Incidentally, very few of Reed's cartoons are actually set in caves; his characters, when not outdoors, seem to prefer multi-storey teepees and lake dwellings.

Reed drew two cartoons purporting to show prehistoric artists, both poking fun at his contemporaries. Figure 2 shows an artist's studio. All the works are sculpture, and quite unlike late-Victorian classically influenced work, let alone the then known portable cave art. Figure 3 shows a Primeval Royal Academy full of squabbling artists, many of them caricatures of Reed's associates. The sunken reliefs of day-to-day scenes are carved into the gallery's walls, perhaps by analogy with classical bas reliefs or murals. In both cartoons, men predominate.

The cartoon in Figure 4, one of the few set in a cave, or with women as the main actors, attributes the daubs on the

walls to a naughty boy. This is pleasingly ironic, given twenty-first century understandings that Upper Palaeolithic children may well have made hand prints and outlines on cave walls.

Cave art goes mainstream

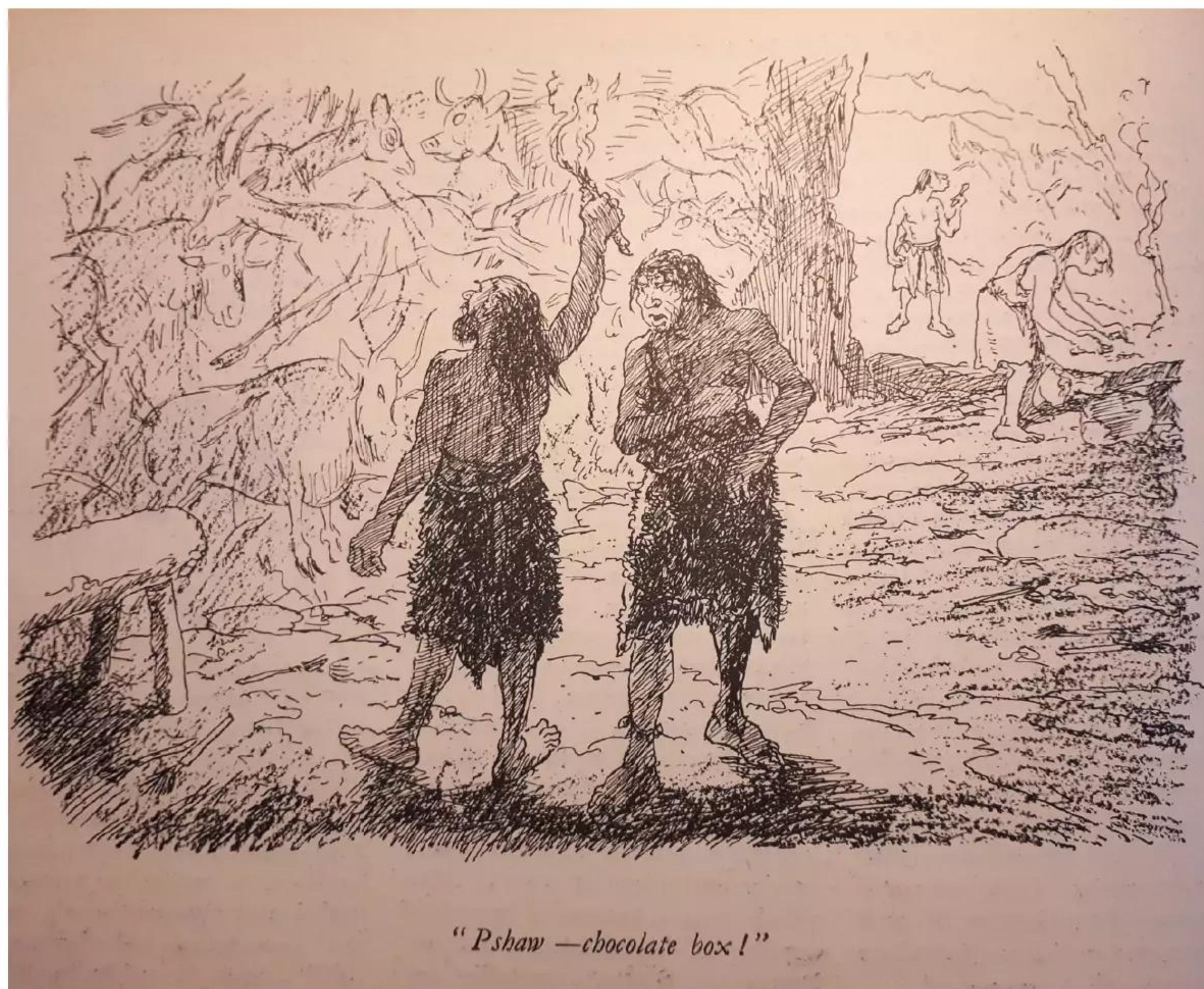
The Altamira paintings were finally acknowledged as genuine by Cartailhac in 1902, after similar sites had been found across southwest France. But, by then, Reed was drawing fewer and fewer Peeps – though, as *Punch*'s parliamentary cartoonist, he had portrayed politicians he disagreed with as cavemen.

Nonetheless, awareness of cave art grew steadily. For example, a 1912 edition of the widely read *Illustrated London News* carried a full page of Abbe Breuil's canonical copies of the Altamira paintings. Books on prehistory for a wider public included sections on cave art, for example, Marjorie and Charles (CHB) Quennell's *Everyday Life in the Old Stone Age* (1921), and CW Airne's *The Story of Prehistoric & Roman Britain Told in Pictures* (1932). These almost invariably showed a male artist, assisted by younger lamp holders, creating pictures of bison, mammoth, or reindeer.

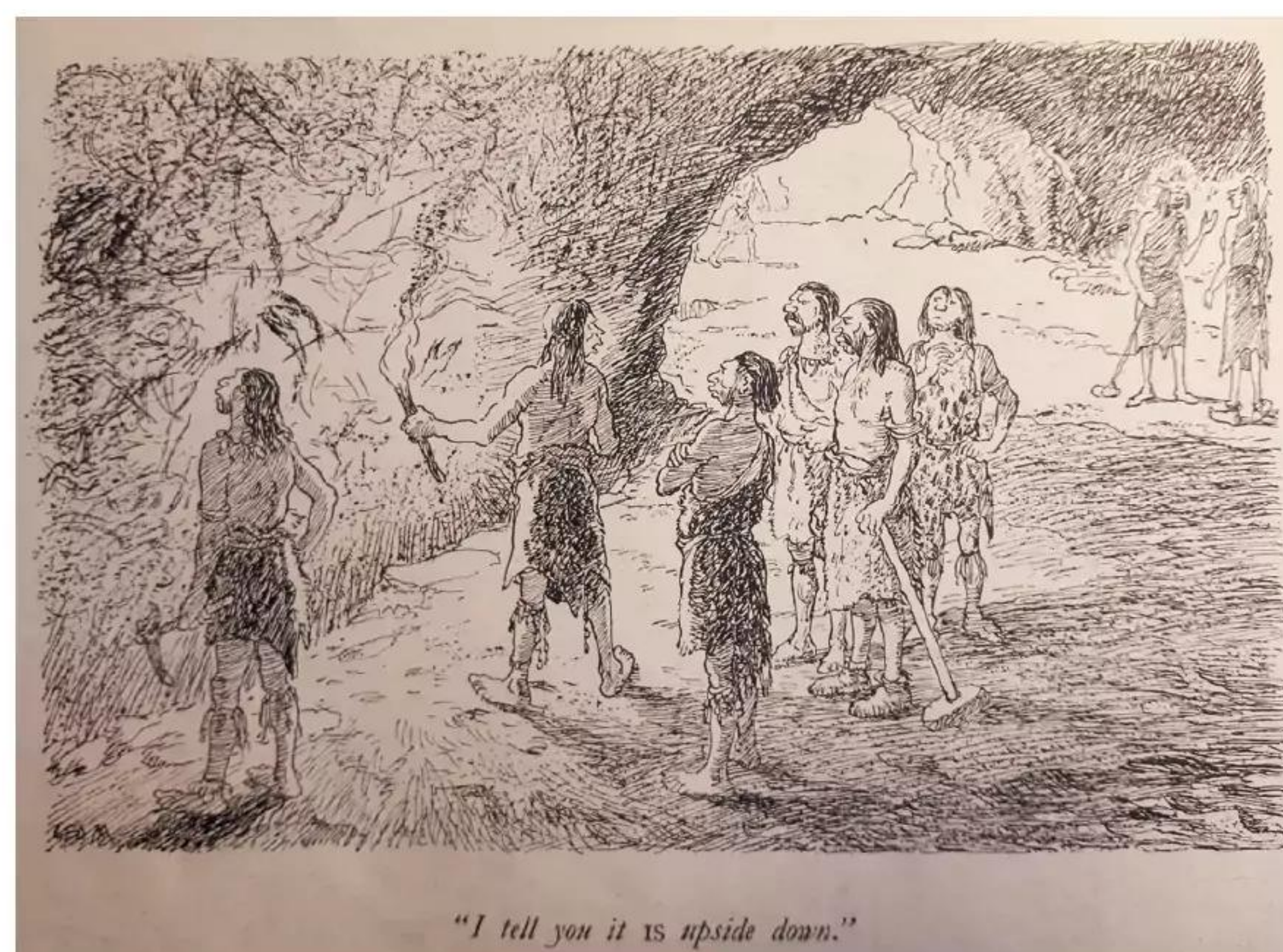
Specialist textbooks on prehistoric art began to be published, discussing the purpose of cave art. Ernest Parkyn's *Introduction to the Study of Prehistoric Art* (1915) suggested that it was created for magical or totemic ceremonies, for a whole community.

In contrast, Gerald Baldwin Brown's *The Art of the Cave Dweller* (1928) rejected ritual or shamanic practices, as well as playfulness, as motivations for cave art, seeing the cave artists as the start of a tradition of pure creativity. Baldwin Brown's book could be a source for much of the cave art in the cartoons that immediately followed.

Right: Figure 9:
"Pshaw – chocolate box!" G. Morrow, *Punch*, Volume 218, 1950, p218



Below: Figure 8:
"I tell you it IS upside down." G. Morrow, *Punch*, Volume 214, 1948, p430



Morrow portrays the artist as a fellow professional seeking to earn an honest crust. He and his wife seem very pleased with the payment for the picture. The men wrestling away the rock on rollers are barefoot. One can only fear for their toes, while wondering why the artist didn't paint in situ.

Less is more

Both Reed's Peeps and Morrow's earlier cartoons are detailed funny pictures, with texts that invite us to explore them. However, cartoon styles changed radically with the advent of *The New Yorker* in 1925. From the start, this US magazine favoured a "zany" style of single panel cartoon, based on implausible juxtapositions, with increasingly sparse pictures and little or no text. *Punch* slowly followed suit.

Figure 6 from 1937 is by Fougasse (Cyril Bird, 1887-1965), who, after First World War service, took his pen name from an unreliable anti-personnel mine. He was the only cartoonist to become *Punch* editor.

The detail on the bison from Font de Gaume in south west France, again found in Baldwin Brown, contrasts with the stripped-down men and the bare cave. The gratuitous slur might well be riffing on Bertie Wooster's fearsome Aunt Agatha, from PG. Wodehouse's extremely popular Jeeves stories.

Figure 7, from 1940, is by Edgar Norfield (1895-1977). The Altamira bison could again be from Baldwin

A Cro-Magnon painter sells a masterpiece

George Morrow (1869-1955), a younger *Punch* colleague of ET Reed, drew almost half of the prehistoric cartoons that appeared in *Punch* between 1919 and 1955. Morrow came from a Belfast family of artists; two of his brothers also drew for *Punch*.

Morrow's cartoons have an air of authenticity that Reed's lack. He carried out thorough background research for his cartoons, and had considerable fellow feeling for prehistoric people. In a 1944 article in *The Artist*, he wrote that they were his favourite, and that he dressed them as he would himself in the same circumstances.

Figure 5 from 1933 shows one of my favourite prehistoric cartoons, reminding me of the fate of much of Banksy's graffiti. The cave painting is an accurate copy of an Altamira bison, from Baldwin Brown's book.

Below: Figure 10:
ffolkes, *Punch*, Volume 232, 1957, p56



Brown, as could the deer and hunters, which are in the Levantine (Capsian) style, like those in the Cova dels Cavalls in Castellon, southern Spain.

This poignant cartoon shows the interior of a corrugated steel Anderson Shelter. During the Second World War, 3.5 million of these were erected. The bags on the bench are for gas masks. Perhaps Norfield is expressing fears that the German might bomb the UK “back into the Stone Age”, as US General Curtis E LeMay advocated for Vietnam in 1965.

Or, perhaps, the shelter offers the comforting solidity of an Ice Age cave.

But is it art?

Morrow’s later cave art cartoons, in Figures 8 and 9, are still busy, but the text is now spoken by one of the characters. Both show visitors to prehistoric art galleries, with contrasting mid-twentieth-century reactions.

The cave art in Figure 8, from 1948, is like the superimposed figures at Teyjat in France, shown in Baldwin Brown’s book. As here, abstract paintings have been regularly accused of being the wrong way up by those who didn’t like them. Ironically, in 2022, the BBC reported that a painting by Mondrian, in Düsseldorf, had been hung incorrectly since 1980.

The cave art in Figure 9, from 1950, seems more generic, and shows off Morrow’s eye for detail. At the cave mouth, a woman is preparing the artist’s materials, while the artist behind her ponders his next masterpiece. The term “chocolate box” was a snobbish response of modernists to more traditional paintings, likening them to the populist images used for selection box lids.

Perhaps some readers are familiar with the Institute of Contemporary Art’s second exhibition, 40,000 years of Modern Art. A comparison of primitive and modern, held in London in 1948. This included colour photos of the Lascaux cave paintings, which had been discovered in 1940.

Despite the untoward assertion of primitiveness, the exhibition nonetheless suggested the continuity of artistic endeavour, by placing cave art alongside work by artists from colonised as well as European countries.

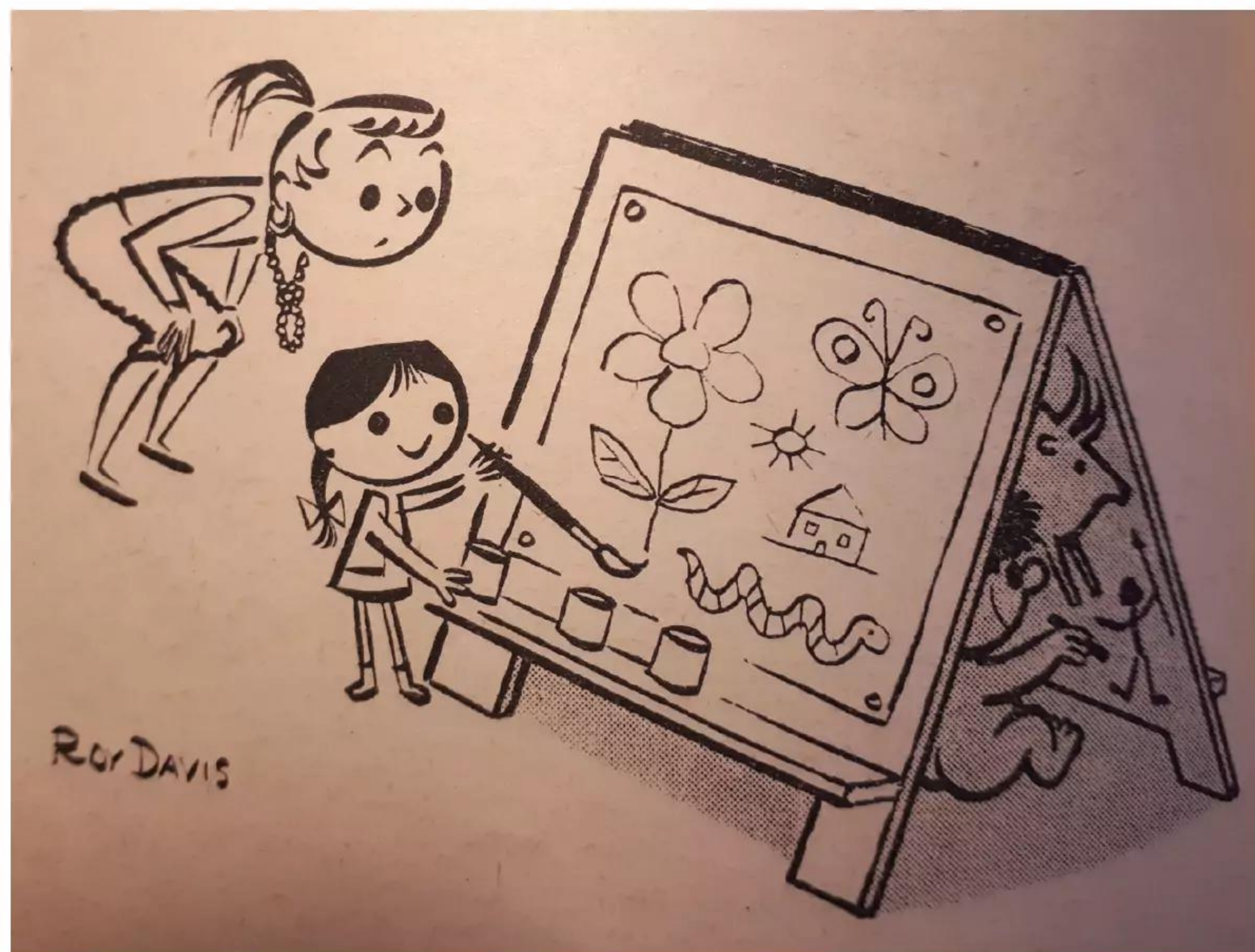
Coffee table cave art

After the Second World War, popular books about cave art began to appear.

Right: Figure 12:
“Wow! I must paint this up when I get home.” M. Williams, *Punch*, Volume 280, 1981, p912



Right: Figure 11:
R. Davis, *Punch*, Volume 236, 1959, p308



Herbert Kühn’s comprehensive *Rock Pictures of Europe*, from 1952, was full of black and white illustrations. Kühn thought that cave art was for shamanic magic to conjure animals.

This was followed in 1957 by the *Larousse Encyclopedia of Prehistoric and Ancient Art*, and, in 1966, by Andreas Lommel’s *Prehistoric and Primitive Man*, in the Hamlyn *Landmarks of the World’s Art* series. These are both large, glossy books, with coloured reproductions, suitable for an ideal home.

Abbe Breuil, who wrote the Larousse section on Palaeolithic art, suggested that animal images “evoke the idea of sympathetic magic”. Similarly, Lommel favoured their use by shaman to support hunting. Both books still promoted the idea that there are contemporary “primitive” people, analogous with prehistoric people.

Thankfully, cartoonists continued to ignore such mutual othering.

There were now plenty of sources for cave art cartoons. But, as the cartoons became zanier, the cave art trope shifted, from recognisable versions of Upper Palaeolithic big beasts to increasingly schematic animals hunted by stick people. It also became increasingly common for cave people to be shown with unambiguous modern knowledge, sometimes even associating with contemporary European people.

Sweet memes are made of this

Figure 10, from 1957, is by Michael ffolkes (Brian Davis, 1925–1988), who took his pen-name from *Burke’s Peerage*. His work mainly appeared in *Punch*, which published his first cartoon when he was 17-years-old.

18 OCTOBER 2025

WITHIN WITHOUT

the ARCHAEOLOGY of PARTITIONS

Most archaeological sites and monuments contain boundaries—ditches, walls, fences or banks. Space on either side of such dividing features can have its own significance or meaning. As well as obvious physical divisions, conceptual and social divisions such as inclusion and exclusion, privacy or social standing can be more challenging to identify but are no less significant. This conference examines those socially and physically constructed partitions and the spaces they divide to offer insight into how they were used and what they meant to the people who used them.

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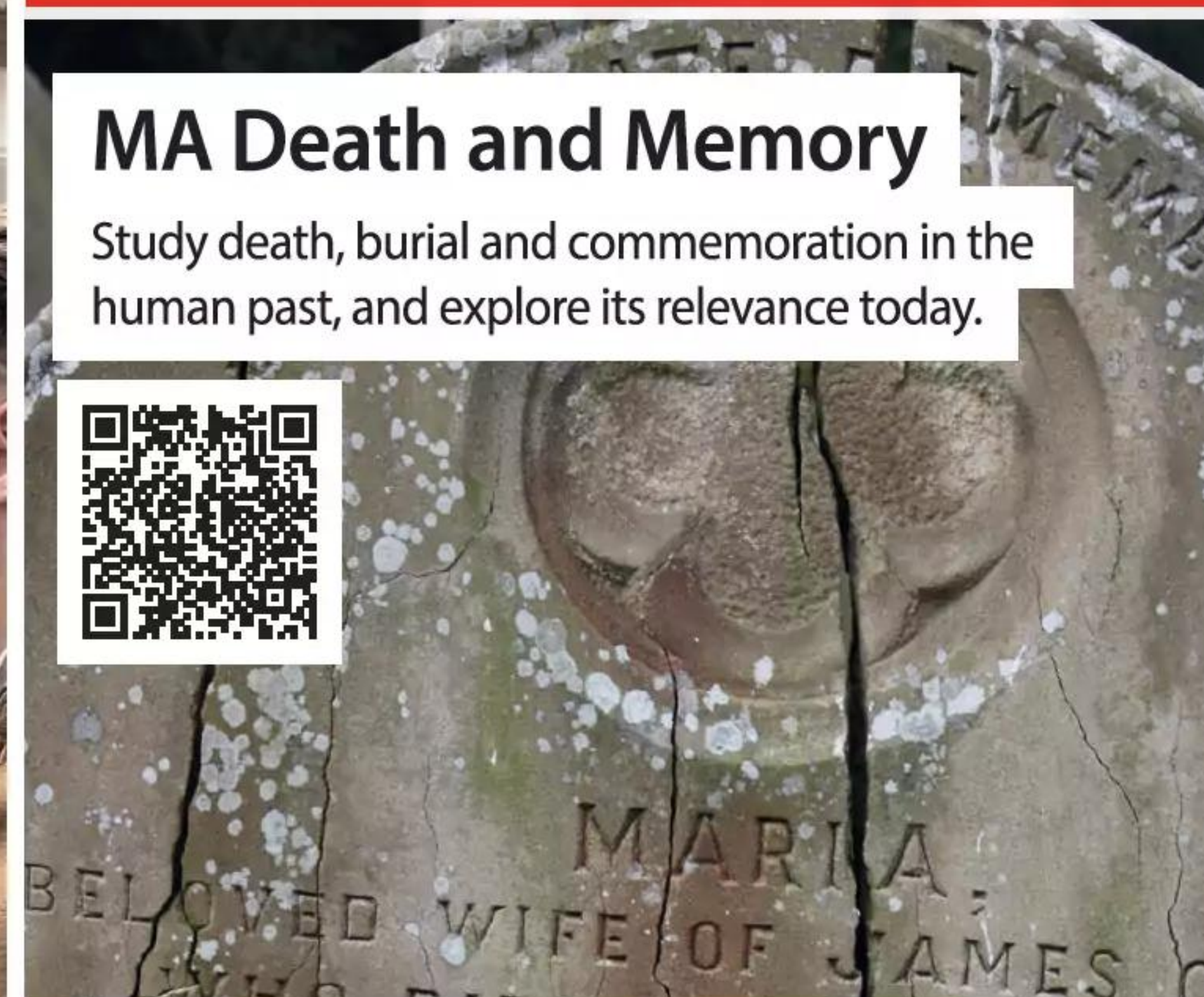
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This cartoon shows a curious combination of an Altamira bison and stick figure hunters, with a cave man gnawing on a bone. Perhaps he lacks the sense, or the means, to seek out the prime cuts from the familiar butcher's chart. But who painted the chart?

Figure 11, from 1959, is by Roy Davis (1921–2004), who was a wallpaper designer before a career as a freelance cartoonist. The humour here reflects strong gender stereotyping. In the 'cave' under the easel, the naked boy draws a schematic bull hunted by a stick figure, while, above, the clothed girl draws more passive topics. Clearly, cave art is primitive as well as masculine.

Mike Williams is a self-taught cartoonist who has also worked in advertising. His meta-cartoon from 1981, shown in Figure 12, has life imitating art. In a rare cartoon display of male buttocks, an artist and his companion try to persuade us that cave art is a faithful reflection of observed reality.

The cave painter as professional artist recurs, as does the cave as art gallery. Figure 13, from 1982, is by birkett (Peter Birkett, died 2022), perhaps best known for his 1981 cartoon showing the Daleks, Dr Who's nemesis, defeated by a staircase. This cartoon has supercilious browsers contrasting the superimposed figures to the left with the well-defined beasts to the right. Here, birkett has conflated cave art humour with the evergreen prehistoric trope of the discovery of fire.

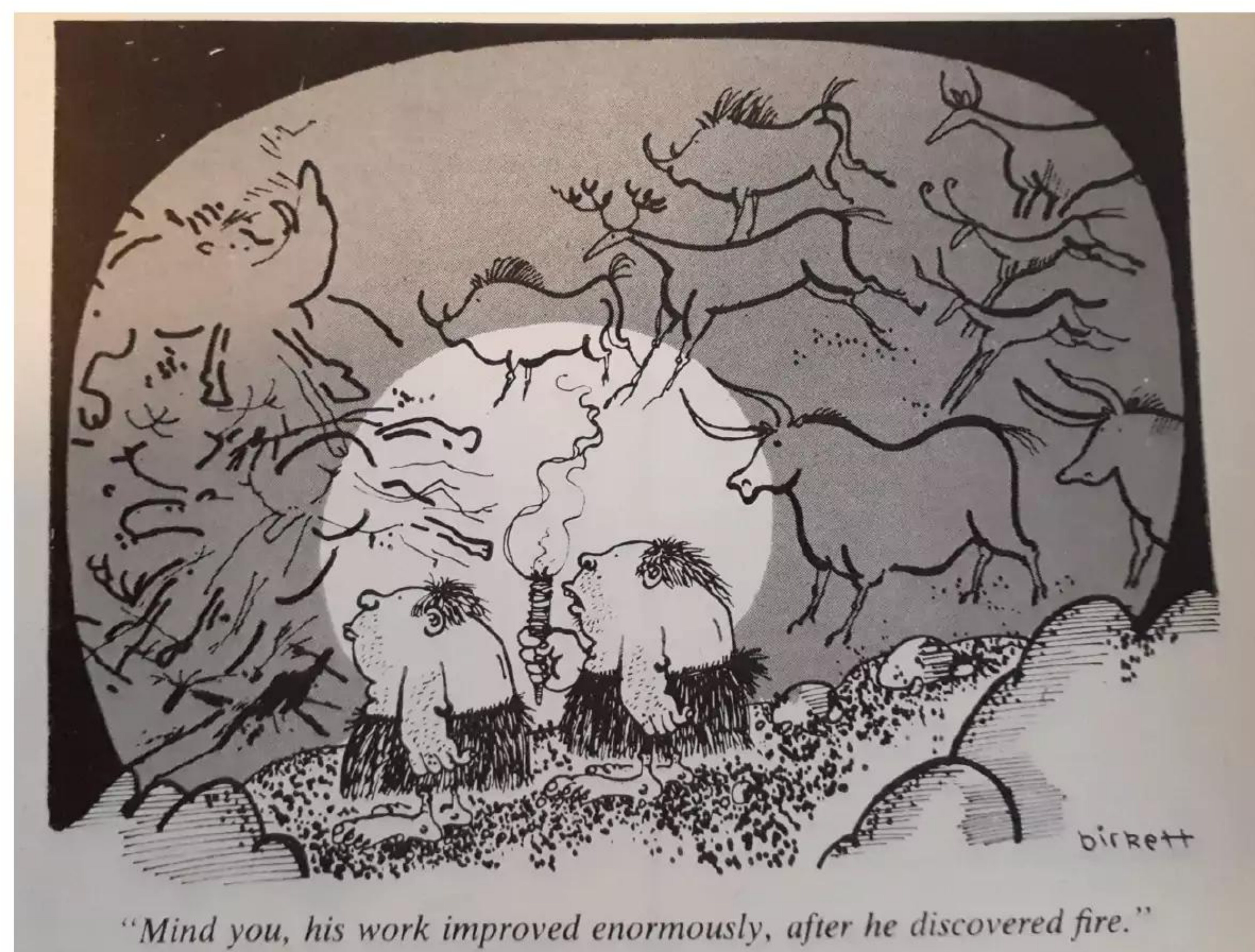
Cave art in a domestic setting also became a common theme. In Figure 14, from 1989 by Linden (Christopher Linden Talbot), the bemused artist watches the practical woman papering the cave with pre-printed art. In 1975, Ed Fisher showed cave art as an estate agents' selling point.

For William's homeowners, from 1981, three flying pterodactyls on the wall are a source of pride. In 1982, Banx drew a children's area in a cave with big-eyed rabbits, deer, and mice. Ger did much the same in 2000, but with familiar cartoon characters. Both are shown alongside the now conventional beasts and stick figure hunters.

Drawing conclusions

While excavating any cartoon may destroy what little humour it offers, analysing prehistoric cartoons does offer insights into the gulf between

Right: Figure 13:
"Mind you, his work improved enormously, after he discovered fire."
birkett, *Punch*,
Volume 282, 1982,
p763



Right: Figure 14:
Linden, *Punch*,
Volume 297, 22nd
September 1989, p20



popular ideas and expert knowledge. This brief survey suggests that the wider public quite quickly accepted a broad cave art meme built on ET Reed's foundational 'caveman' tropes.

Morrow, and those who immediately followed him, were well familiar with parietal art, and took its reproduction seriously, no matter how absurd the cartoon. However, they paid no attention to how cave art had been interpreted by experts, favouring an analogy with the artist who sells from the studio or art galleries.

And, once the tropes of big beasts and stick people with weapons were established, there was less and less need for them to resemble the splendid originals from 30,000 years ago, for the reader to get the point.

Now, there may be no clear evidence for what motivated cave artists, but cartoons are made by artists with mouths to feed and are selected by editors with proprietors to satisfy and circulation figures to maintain.

If the editors hadn't felt that the public was receptive to these cartoons, then the cartoonists wouldn't have gone on drawing them. So, there's a sort of feedback loop, linking cartoonists, editors, and readers, that

perpetuates the quick hit stereotypes that underlie cartoons, regardless of how understandings change.

Perhaps none of this matters; cartoons are a tiny part of the wider dissemination of prehistory. But perhaps this disconnect between artists and experts flags up opportunities. Cartoonist Bill Tidy (1933–2023) worked with archaeologists Mike Pitts and Paul Bahn, to produce illustrations for *British Archaeology*, and popularisations of archaeology, respectively.

I think it would be pleasing if contemporary readers could be amused and challenged by similarly well-informed prehistoric cartoons, in particular to correct the widespread misapprehension, reflected here, that cave art was only made by white men.

Twenty-first-century theories for cave art, like Lewis Williams' notion of liminal spaces, and the more recent suggestion that marks next to animals constitute calendars, are strongly contested.

Perhaps a wider public might be made aware of these debates through cartoons. How about a shaman, half-way through a liminal portal, turning back for her packed lunch? Or a prehistoric child bumping into a bison on a wall, in search of Platform 9¾? Or a hunter-artist losing count of the lunar months?

If only I could draw. ■

Thanks to Jeff Oliver, of the University of Aberdeen, for their helpful critiques of this article and Ioan Nedelcu, of Topham Partners LLP, for facilitating the licensed use of Figures 1, 6, 7, and 10 to 14.



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By Tristan Hughes
History Hit
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The Ancients: A Time-Travelling Treat on Everything History

Review by Neil Redfern

If you're curious about becoming an archaeologist or love ancient history, you should check out 'The Ancients' podcast. Hosted by Tristan Hughes, this show brings the ancient world to life by exploring its mysteries in each episode. First and foremost, the production of the podcast is outstanding.

The audio quality is superb, featuring studio-grade interviews and expert sound engineering that deliver a fully immersive listening experience. Each episode envelops you in a rich tapestry of sound that is gentle and complements the interviews instead of overpowering them.

A top-notch podcast thrives on three essential elements: captivating content, well-organised structure, and top-tier technical quality. 'The Ancients' excels in all these areas, enhanced by the charisma of its host, Tristan Hughes. With his engaging voice and captivating presence, Tristan has a knack for asking thought-provoking, open-ended questions that make each episode not just informative but truly compelling.

With over 500 episodes to explore, listeners are treated to a treasure trove of topics. Many of the more recent episodes strike that perfect chord, making them ideal for long listening sessions or those moments of reflection during your commute. This is far from your typical dry lecture; instead, it showcases enlightening discussions with leading historians and archaeologists who share their expertise in a refreshingly approachable manner. It's intellectually stimulating content devoid of elitism.

From the fascinating Neolithic era of Britain to the dramatic Fall of Rome – and even the enigmatic age of dinosaurs – each episode delves into a captivating topic, skilfully balancing depth and curiosity. It's one of those rare auditory experiences you can revisit repeatedly, unearthing new insights with every listen. Ideal for lifelong

learners and history enthusiasts alike. The episode on Herculaneum and its connection to the site of Pompeii, featuring Professor Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, offered a thought-provoking perspective on the Roman site. The facts presented and the resources examined were intriguing. Without revealing too much, this episode led me to reflect on how life appeared thousands of years ago.

Another episode I enjoyed was about Helen of Troy, featuring author Natalie Haynes. Her books, *Pandora's Jar* and *A Thousand Ships*, captivated me with compelling counter-arguments to the traditional Greek mythologies. Listening to her interpretation of Helen and the various viewpoints on her story was deliciously horrifying.

I was also captivated by an episode that focused on the Chinese zodiac. Without sounding overly academic, the podcast delivers history filled with heart and wonder.

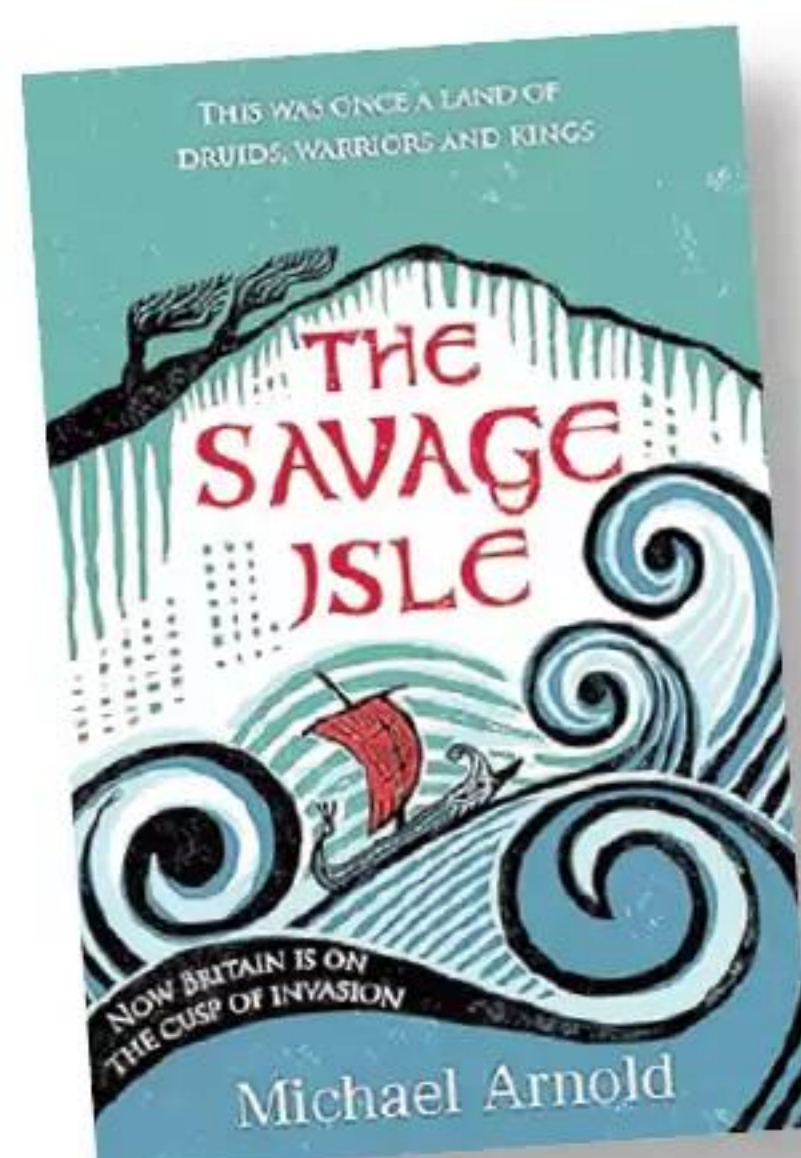
The guests, always distinguished experts in their fields, offer not only factual knowledge but also innovative perspectives, often challenging conventional narratives.

Two aspects that could improve the podcast's inclusivity are featuring more international scholars and incorporating more interdisciplinary topics that explore the current social scene alongside history. After all, history does repeat itself.

With thoughtfulness, sharp production, and an unwavering sense of fascination, it's one of those rare shows that educates, entertains, and inspires all at once. Overall, the podcast serves as a playground for history lovers and casual listeners alike. 'The Ancients' makes ancient history feel remarkably relevant and undeniably cool.

Highly recommended for anyone even slightly curious about the enigmatic worlds of the past. My advice – dive in and discover a podcast that feeds curiosity!

by Michael Arnold
Canelo
352 pp hb
ISBN 9781835982365
£16.99



The Savage Isle

Reviewed by Alison Edwards

Historical fiction author Michael Arnold has begun a new series, set in Britain on the cusp of the Roman invasion.

This detailed and evocative first instalment recreates the sensory experiences and political

tensions of this transformative moment in British history.

Enthusiasts of the Iron Age will recognise a wealth of well-researched details; those new to this period in British archaeology will be swept along by the fast-paced action.

Arnold's writing style occasionally tends to the verbose, but his grasp of the subject and skill in creating a gripping story are undeniable.

Please note: due to violent content, this book is unsuitable for younger readers.

Mick Sharp visits a Somerset site that combines the historical with the religious and mythical **Hill of Dreams: Glastonbury Tor**

Tor Hill rises above the watery land surrounding the Isle of Avalon, a peninsula projecting into the Somerset Levels. A beacon feeding the imagination, visible for miles around, it transmits and attracts.

The pulsing heart of a spiritual landscape laced with legends and lies, magic, myth, and marketing. Tread carefully in this fluid world of substance and illusion.

The Tor's fifteenth-century perpendicular tower is real. It was added to the west end of St Michael's church, built in the 1300s by Glastonbury abbot Adam of Sodbury. The earthquake of 1275 had destroyed its Norman predecessor.

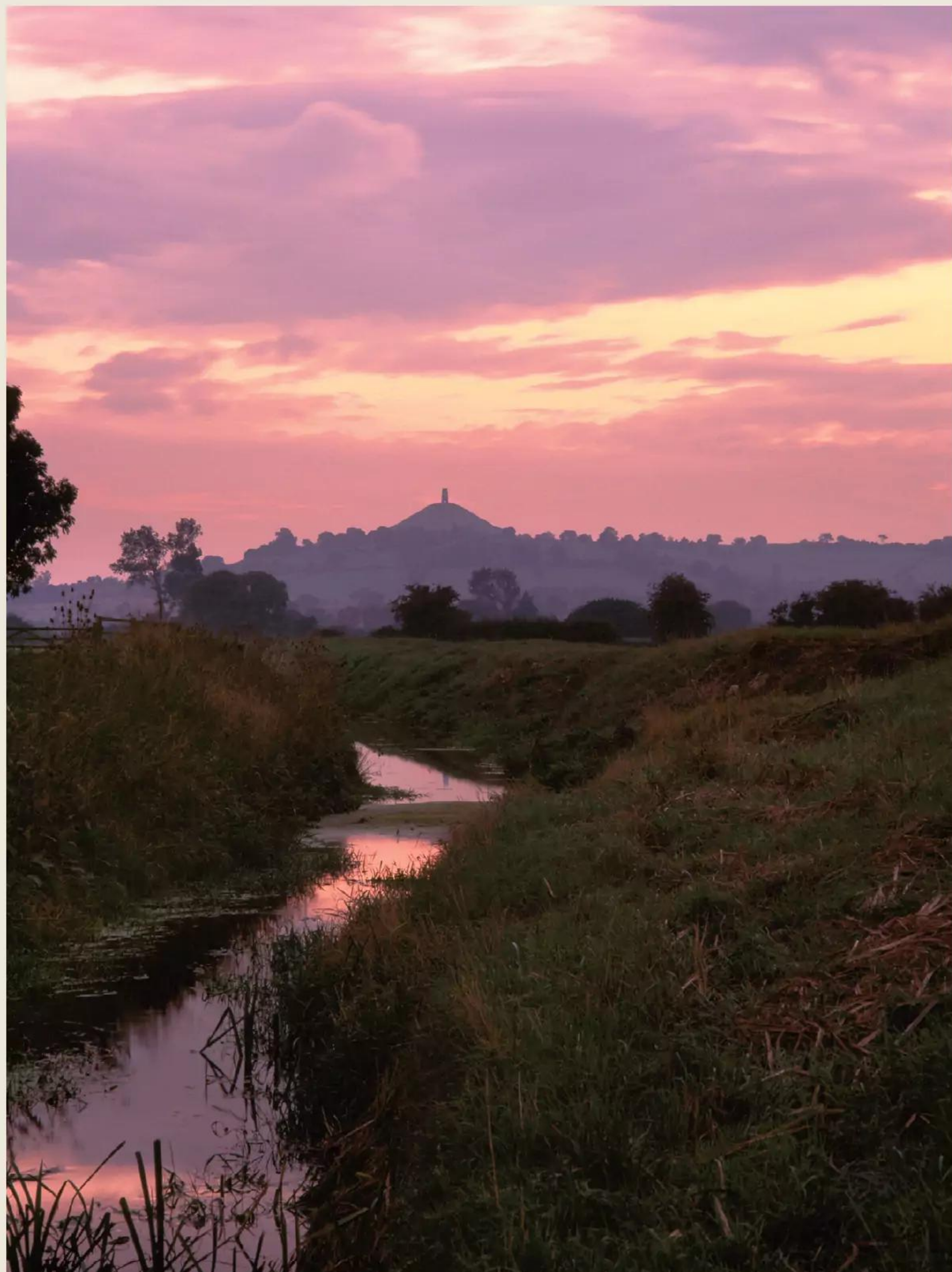
Remains of timber buildings, metalwork, and Mediterranean pottery suggest post-Roman occupation around the sixth century. Later, the Tor became a monastic retreat and a pilgrim centre for Glastonbury Abbey and the cult of St Michael.

The Tor has been described as a hollow hill, the entrance to the Celtic underworld of Annwn, ruled by Gwyn ap Nudd. Some regard it as a Neolithic goddess mound with seven terraces forming an ascending spiral pathway, or a three-dimensional maze. Others see the "pleasant pastures" walked upon by Jesus with his great-uncle, tin trader Joseph of Arimathea.

Legend has Joseph return to build a wattle church on the future site of Glastonbury Abbey. He carried with him the Holy Grail used at the Last Supper, and two silver cruets containing blood and sweat of the crucified Christ. William Blake's poem "And did those feet in ancient time...." speaks of this founding of the New Jerusalem.

Henry VIII suppressed Glastonbury Abbey in 1539. The sixtieth abbot, Richard Whiting, was executed on the Tor, his body quartered to be displayed in local towns, his head left dangling from the abbey gateway. The stones of St Michael's were taken away.

The Tor is said to lie on several ancient leys, straight lines of earth



MICK SHARP



Glastonbury Tor (ST 512386) is in the care of The National Trust. The nearest (fee-paying) car park is half a mile away on Chilkwell Street, Glastonbury BA6 8DB. There are two designated spaces for blue badge holders in Stonedown Lane.

For further details: nationaltrust.org.uk/glastonbury-tor



energy linking sacred sites and prominent places. One runs from St Michael's Mount in Cornwall, through Brent Tor, Burrow Mump, Avebury, and Bury St Edmunds to the Suffolk coast. Another connects Glastonbury Abbey, Stonehenge, and Canterbury Cathedral.

In the 1920s, while illustrating a new publication of the Norman-French manuscript called *The High History of the Holy Grail*, Katharine Maltwood concluded that King Arthur and his knights on their Grail Quest had spent much time locally in the Vales of Avalon.

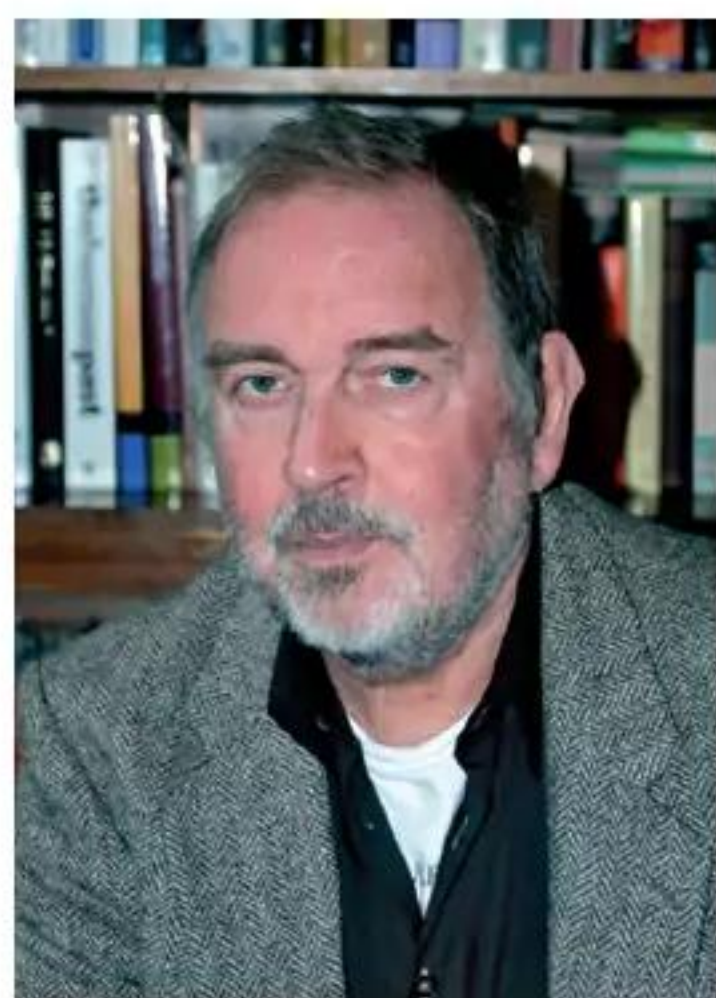
She recognised a circular zodiac (round table) some 10 miles across with 12 signs created using landscape features. Glastonbury Tor forms part

of her Aquarius (N), Arthur on his horse (Pennard Hill) is Sagittarius (E). Many believe that Arthur sleeps in Avalon: "The king that was, the king that shall be."

Glastonbury attracts colourful characters. Violet Mary Firth (1890-1946) became Dion Fortune, occultist, ceremonial magician, and influential writer. A member of several Hermetic and mystical societies, she co-founded the Fraternity of the Inner Light which had a base camp in Chalice Orchard at the foot of the Tor.

During the Second World War, Fortune and her followers undertook regular magical visualisations to bring about peace, protect Britain's coast using angelic forces, and counteract the pervasive evil of Hitler's Nazis. ■

Dr Greg Bailey on broadcasting



Tracking a well-worn TV trope popularised by a well-worn ex-Parliamentary presenter, anatomist and anthropologist Alice Roberts has also recently taken to rail in her travels.

Although I missed this contribution in describing a TV blitz of all things Pharaonic in *British Archaeology's* last issue, I might have noted *Ancient Egypt by Train with Alice Roberts* (a four-part series; BossaNova Media for Channel 4, 2023) in a somewhat futile effort toward a completion of recent television Tut-mania.

Presumably, she broke her journey, but just a year later Professor Roberts took to the rails once more with *Ottoman Empire by Train with Alice Roberts* (a five-part series for Channel 4, 2024). So as this train could run and run, by no means finally, UK's favourite TV palaeopathologist was off-railing again with *Ancient Greece by Train with Alice Roberts* (a five-part series for Channel 4, 2025).

In the interest of full disclosure the above series was 'sponsored by P&O Cruises'. Boats of various type and size and a good deal of striding about would be featured. "Millions of tourists of all nationalities come here every year," says the presenter while peering at the Aegean coast from her train window.

Setting the scene with a little historical, if somewhat chilling, perspective she went on to explain how, "3,000 years ago it was just as popular. The ports of the Aegean would have been crammed with people, families, soldiers, workers, and kings travelling for trade and to fight. But the cities of ancient Greece were often at war... with each other."

Venturing, as the presenter promises, to visit sites, "Off the beaten track," she is every bit as good as her word while meeting and greeting on site with expert specialists whose intimate knowledge of temple, shrine, sanctuary, burial-site, city or settlement, theatrical orchestra and chorus or unsettling battlefield reality, provided a destination worth the journey.

I was somewhat reminded of Bettany Hughes' *Treasures of the World* (six-part series, Channel 4, May 2021: sponsored by P&O Cruises). With Roberts, here indeed was another popular peripatetic TV presenter (turned prospective travel-agent) on her travels to meet putative expert with special knowledge

on far-flung archaeo-historic type-site sub-genre, but with added train-spotting potential.

As if in answer to Channel Four's foray into all things classical, BBC4 offered a re-run of art historian Alistair Sooke's excellent *Treasures of Ancient Greece* (three episodes, April 2025).

Here was another chance for me to sort out the timeline for dark to red-figure pot decoration and the 'progress' of archaic-period static figurative sculpture to the dynamic figures of high classical sculptors.

I am, however, much less sure of the presenter's claim that the lost-wax process of bronze-casting was invented in fifth century BCE Greece rather than already being current across chalcolithic Western Asia some four or five thousand years earlier. Perhaps archaeological overview might still occasionally clarify aesthetic insight.

Five years on from the disastrous fire, *Rebuilding Notre Dame: the last chapter* (BBC2, April 2025; see also this column in *British Archaeology* 199, November December 2024) a second English-language version presented by a non-cosplaying Lucy Worsley was again both sobering and uplifting.

The huge common effort by academics and artisans, specialist carpenters, masons and scaffolders, artists-in and restorers-of stained-glass, architects, and archaeologists, to rebuild, or as the programme suggested, occasionally even improve, a medieval wonder for a modern world might even at least offer some palliative for our careless, crisis-strewn times?

Still Gallic, and as I believe it's fruitless to attempt to disentangle either art or history from archaeology, I must continue with a strong recommendation for BBC4's short season of *Artists and Models* (BBC4, April 2025; first broadcast 1986).

These three drama-documentaries explored an ever turbulent often violent history through the works, vicissitudes and triumphs of three great late eighteenth/early nineteenth-century artists in the swirl of political ideas and changing allegiance of revolutionary and Napoleonic France.

The monarchist-turned-Jacobin radical Jacques-Louis David; that painter's student, the neo-classicist Jean Auguste

Ingres, and lastly Jean-Louis André Théodore Géricault, a former Bonapartist and painter of the endlessly theorised *The Raft of the Medusa*, shared a vividly illustrated episode each.

An introductory programme from David Olusoga (*David Olusoga Remembers: Artists and Models*, BBC4, April 2025) helped viewers (including me) prepare for the series. Here the historian recalls the shock and lifelong inspiration that Leslie Megahey's 1986 mini-series would hold and project for this then 13-year-old boy.

Olusoga credits this broadcast with guiding his own career as TV producer and public historian, though he cautions that, as befits the period, scenes located in the artists' studios frequently feature full frontal nudity.

That Megahey's beautifully acted drama-documentary television setting of revolutionary art in an age of revolution still seems revolutionary some 40 years later is itself worth pondering. If neither Grecian archaeo-travelogue, nor a resurrected Grand Dame of Paris, or even the equally grand revolutionary sweep of French art-history appeal, perhaps a less adventurous, simpler format could?

In Our Time (BBC Radio4) is a refreshingly genre-free proposition which has gathered an academic quorum each Monday morning since 1968 to share specialist knowledge on a host of subjects across science and the humanities.

Inquisitor Melvyn Bragg introduces each broadcast with the offer of more than a thousand recordings of previous programmes, ranging from the esoteric doings of slime mould to the public philosophy of Socrates. Recent subjects have included the great king Cyrus of Persia, Barbary Corsairs, and Ireland's heroic Brian Boru at the identity forming Battle of Clontarf.

Might TV adapt such a group discussion of prominent – though in budgetary terms inexpensive – international experts illustrated by archive film and photograph, map and diagram to do likewise?

Perhaps TV commissioners might occasionally look to 'depth and breadth' before 'fresh and exciting' to reach a new audience? Readers can catch up with all past broadcasts of *In Our Times* on BBC Sounds. TV broadcasts of programmes mentioned are still available on BBC iPlayer, or online at My4. ■

Alison Edwards, listed buildings caseworker at the Council for British Archaeology, presents an example from the council's files

80. Howells of Cardiff

Those who have visited Cardiff will know that the centre of the city has a distinctive character, characterised by late nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings in high-quality materials. Formerly a small city (with a population under 2000 in 1801), the Industrial Revolution brought wealth and rapid growth to Cardiff as a new canal, docks, and a railway linked the port to the mines of south Wales.

While the medieval street plan still survives in the historic core of the city, the buildings mostly date from the later economic boom, including a number of spectacular glass-roofed arcades.

Architectural detailing celebrated the wealth of the city and the status of its inhabitants. Modern structures in the city centre mostly blend harmoniously into the cityscape by using high-quality materials for façades and staying low enough not to overwhelm their neighbours.

The CBA caseworkers are worried that a new development will threaten Cardiff's cohesive architectural character by creating a new 13-storey tower block after demolishing part of a large Grade II* listed department store. The department store, Howells of Cardiff, first opened in the 1870s and gradually expanded to fill a whole block in the city centre. However, the neoclassical 1870s building is not the earliest on the site; the expanding store surrounded and then incorporated a neo-classical 1860s Baptist Chapel, with its stone front and



KATHERINE EDWARDS [2]



Top: The landmark 1920s corner building designed by Percy Thomas



Right: Nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings fronting Trinity Street, with St John's Church; the new tower block would sit just behind the facades

cast iron pillars surviving within the open-plan store.

Reflecting changing manufacturing and consumer habits, Howell's began as a 'drapers' store on the main thoroughfare of St Mary Street, but expanded its footprint and scope to include warehouses to store goods. Further shop fronts were created around the city block, and a hotel and restaurant to serve the wealthy customers was built in the 1890s, as well as various sales areas.

Architect Percy Thomas (described by Cadw as South Wales' most distinguished C20 architect) designed several new blocks for the store in the 1920s, inspired by the grand designs of the new Selfridges store in London. These occupy prominent positions in central Cardiff's streetscape.

The store as a whole is Grade II* listed, putting it in the top 9% of all listed buildings in Wales. The list entry notes that the south block is 'an unusually finely detailed and well-preserved example of inter-war Classicism', while the north block is an 'unusually well-preserved example of a

nineteenth century department store'. The Borough Public House (the former hotel and restaurant commissioned by Howells to serve his customers) is also Grade II* listed.

Collectively, the components within the site hold significant group value, as well as evidential value which illustrates Cardiff's architectural, social, and economic development, and wider patterns of consumption and production in the Victorian period and twentieth century. Unfortunately, after a period of ownership by House of Fraser, the store closed in March 2023. Many of the staff made redundant had worked there for decades. Changing retail trends mean that large department stores on high streets are not often economically viable, so re-developments for the site are proposed.

There is plenty of scope for the re-use and adaptation of the building. While the nineteenth-century elements of the building are relatively well preserved, the later additions (particularly the post-war blocks on the southern half of the site) offer flexibility for adaptation.



Left: Visualisation of how the new tower block would appear from Working Street

PATEL TAYLOR [2]

However, sensitivity is needed to retain the site's special historic character.

CBA objections

The CBA objects to the current proposals. The problem with the scheme is that it does not consider the building's historic development or the urban context. While the elaborate façade along St Mary's Street would be largely preserved, a series of Victorian warehouses behind it – vital for the store's function – would be demolished and replaced with a tall modern tower.

The prioritisation of aesthetic features over functional building elements with historic and evidential value is a battle the CBA casework team is constantly fighting. It is much harder to understand how buildings were used over different periods unless we retain a hierarchy of different spaces, with different functions.

In addition, the application proposes the stripping out of historic fixtures and fittings within the surviving store buildings, including staircases and decorative elements, and constructing bulky new upward extensions which would almost double the height of the buildings fronting onto Wharton Street



and Trinity Street, adjacent to St John's Churchyard.

The proposed tower would sit back from the street frontages, but cut across the existing medieval street plots, harming the historic grain of the city and losing the outward-facing character of the existing commercial block. At 13 storeys, it would be around six to seven storeys higher than even the modern buildings nearby.

The tower would cause harm to the wider cityscape, creating a new dominant feature in views across the historic city centre, including from the Grade I listed

St John's Church and its charming churchyard, and from the medieval Cardiff Castle and Bute Park. Current proposals show the tower clad in red brick with white protrusions to the sides, with simple vertical windows. The quality of the design does not respond to the considered and harmonious late nineteenth- and twentieth-century streetscape.

Cumulatively, the heritage harm to the Grade II* listed site and its setting would be considerable. This level of harm is not justified by the benefit of bringing the site back into use – which could be achieved through a far less destructive and invasive scheme which reuses the existing buildings and celebrates the site's iconic historic role in the city.

Objections were also submitted by the Cardiff Civic Society, the Victorian Society, and the Twentieth Century Society, all highlighting the damage which the proposals would cause to Howells, the conservation area, and local character. We urge the developers to rethink their plans, and create a more sensitive scheme for this significant site. ■

<https://casework.jcnas.org.uk/case/108288>

Left: The elevation of the proposed new tower block

The 'Glastonbury' of history festivals takes place each year in Wiltshire. All of history will be there, and this year, so will the CBA. Neil Henty talks to festival planner Laura Bailey.

The Chalke Valley History Festival

I have a bit of a confession to make. I love the Chalke Valley History Festival. This year, I will be attending for the fourth time and I cannot wait. So when I was asked whether I wanted to write a short article for the magazine about the festival I jumped at the chance.

The festival began as a fundraiser for the Broad Chalke Cricket Club. It was started by James Heneage, founder of the Ottaker's book chain, and historian James Holland, author of many a Second World War book and co-host of long-running podcast 'We Have Ways of Making You Talk' alongside comedian Al Murray (both regulars at the festival).

If you've never been – and you really should – it is hard to put into words how much history is on offer. But here I shall try my best. One of the festival's mottos is 'to make history accessible', a phrase that mirrors much of the engagement work of the CBA and its Festival of Archaeology.

A year ago I sat down with Laura Bailey, programme director for Living History and Events at the festival, and we talked about how great it would be if the CBA could have more of a presence.

I have seen some wonderful talks in recent years – Michael Wood and Alex Langlands among them – witnessed some amazing living history, such as last year's Prittlewell princely burial reconstruction with its experimental smelting – and had the chance to talk to some fascinating people, especially the living historians who have so much knowledge to share (I can picture the duellists as I write).

You can sit back and listen, you can get hands on, you can immerse yourself in history from the Neolithic to the modern day. Oh, and there's great food, music, and a bar. And a bookshop; there is something for everyone.

Ahead of this year's festival I had the pleasure of once again catching up with Laura to talk about the CBA, the programme, and the importance of engaging new audiences.

Programming the festival

I've heard it dubbed the Glastonbury of history festivals and there is so much going on all week, what is the main theme linking the programming of the Chalke



MARTIN COOK



Valley History Festival (we'll refer to it as Chalke for the rest of the article)?

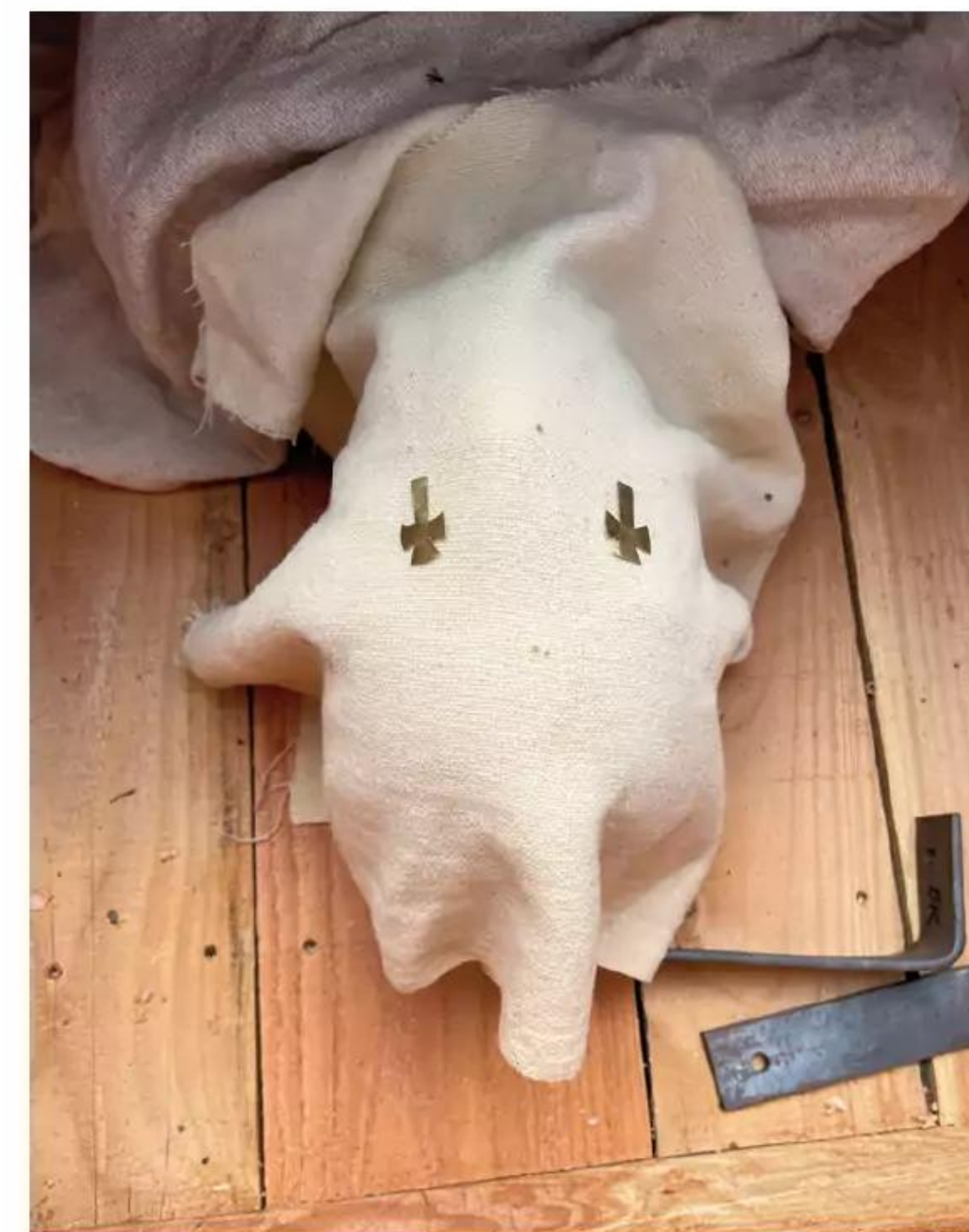
"We work hard to develop a really interesting programme, one that's relevant, but we're also trying to highlight lots of new voices. And I think that's the way the programme works best, by creating really interesting strands of programming."

Working with the CBA

Why is the festival interested in working with the CBA?

"The CBA is such a crucially important organisation for archaeology in the UK and recently we've become much more interested in how the past connects with the present, how we connect with the future, how history is hugely important in today's society, and how we can use history to help us navigate our present."

"And I think that really connects with the CBA's mission and the way in which CBA uses archaeology as a way of connecting communities, helping people to think about our local environments, our heritage, our societies, connecting as people rather than just thinking about



NEIL HENTY [2]

objects. That really aligns with how we're developing our programme and we're really excited about CBA having a physical presence at the festival."

What will the CBA be doing at the festival?

"The CBA will have a stand as part of our new heritage hub. There will be some engagement work with the public around object handling, thinking about place and memory and community, and working with our schools festival as well."

"So, doing engagement work with our students, talking about the Young Archaeologists Club as well, which also aligns really nicely with what we're doing at Chalke and how we're hoping to get younger audiences involved with history. Our goal is to make history really accessible to all audiences, trying to introduce new voices, and diverse voices."

Top right: The festivals living history events always prove popular

Right: The Prittlewell princely burial (and far right, detail), created Ian Thackray, Will Sherman, Adam Batty, Andrew Ziminksi, and Phill Gregson from Remaking History

Chalke 2025

For those who have attended before, what will be new this year?

“We’ve got a new strand of programming which we started last year as our young historians day. And this year, we’ve got a whole weekend of Chalke Introduces programming, which is all about getting new voices into history. And highlighting some of the new work that’s going on, which lines up really nicely with the work the CBA is doing around promoting younger voices and shaping how we think about history today.”

“I’ve noticed a greater emphasis on deep thinking about the nature of archaeology recently.”

“We were discussing this when we were thinking about archaeology in the festival, i.e. what is archaeology, what do we mean by it? Because there’s so much to it. When you think about just how we relate to the environment around us, whether it’s landscape, buildings or objects.”

For those wanting an archaeological fix, what events are planned for the 2025 festival?

“Our archaeological offerings this year are very varied, both in time and in the way that we’re approaching archaeology.

“One event that would particularly appeal is on the Wessex hill figures. The talk is called Land of Giants, with Alex Langlands, David Miles, and Helen Gittos. It should be a really fascinating exploration of those very tangible marks on the environment.

“The presenters will look at how new archaeological practices and scientific dating methods can shed light on the figures and change our understandings.

“Then, going back in time, we’ve got an event on voices from ancient Mesopotamia with Rebecca Wragg Sykes, Moudhy Al-Rashid, and Selena Wisnom. That will be looking at cuneiform tablets and the glimpses they give us into ancient societies.

“Another big event that we’ll be doing is a talk focusing on the Portable Antiquity Scheme: Beneath Our Feet: Everyday Discoveries Reshaping History is an event beneath with Michael Lewis and Ian Richardson.

“They’ve just released a book with the British Museum centred on some of the



Left: Living history events and the people who run them are one of the key elements that make the festival so popular

GRAHAM SMITH

discoveries that have been made through the scheme. The kind of everyday objects and discoveries that have come about through people metal detecting and reporting finds, and all of these very personal interesting stories that give us a real insight into people’s everyday lives.”

Regular readers should also check out a talk being given by John Henry Phillips on The Archaeology Of Romany Gypsies, which featured in issue 201.

Living history at the festival

One of the highlights, for me, of every festival I have attended has been the living history aspect which goes on all around the site, all through the day.

Why do living history and archaeology work so well together at the festival?

“Living history draws on the finds of archaeology and the methods of archaeological practice and brings it to life. It brings the grey literature data sets and reports that to the general public might not seem hugely interesting, and takes those discoveries and puts them into practice.

“And from these we can gain new insights into past societies: How was this tool used, or how was this object created? Why were they made in this way? What were they used for? Living history is all about putting that into practice, trying things, and experimenting.

“It’s drawing something from the artefacts and objects to discover something about people and human stories, and what it was actually like to live in that society.”

“I don’t think they could work without each other, so, I’m very much championing living history and experimental archaeology at the festival. And this year we’re really excited because we’ve got a whole new section of the living

history programme based around Neolithic and Bronze Age societies. Which we’ve never done before.

“We’ve got Sally Pointer, and a team from the University of Liverpool and Cambridge, as well students and other professionals, exploring things like birch tarring and pottery, we’ve got experiential archaeologist and living historian Caroline Nicolay from Pario Gallico who will be exploring the history of natural construction, from the ancient methods used in the Iron Age to traditional local techniques.”

The living history events offer everything from the above Neolithic and Iron Age events through to medieval smelting, sail making, apothecary gardens, right through to modern day Royal Navy commandos. And if you have children, you can send them to an SOE training camp or to storm a First World War trench (note: experience tickets are additional to day tickets) – that should work up an appetite from some of the delicious food on site; you can even visit the historic market place and try some authentic recipes from down through the ages.

A final word

“There’s always been something archaeological in the programming, but it’s always been kind woven in between things. So, we’re really excited to be able to highlight more archaeology and explore what archaeology means.” ■

A note on tickets

Tickets for talks used to be sold individually, which meant you needed a separate ticket for each talk in one of the main tents, with everything else free to attend. This year, one ticket buys you access to all events and talks on site. You can buy a week’s pass or a three-day pass for the weekend, a day ticket, or even just an evening ticket. Children and students have their own rates. See www.chalkefestival.com for details of all the talks, events, and experiences and for all ticketing information.

Dr Jo Kirton, delivery & engagement manager at the Council for British Archaeology, reports on the world of young and aspiring archaeologists

CBA's Youth Advisory Board: a successful 18 months

Our Youth Advisory Board has been up and running for 18 months. Over this time our members have undertaken all sorts of activities. They have joined numerous panels, advocating for greater support for students and early career individuals, encouraging youth governance initiatives and the dismantling of barriers to participation. They have represented the CBA at the Archaeological Achievement Awards, at CIfA's annual conference, and at the Heritage Alliance's Heritage Days.

Furthermore, our Youth Advisors have worked as young consultants and critical friends on several CBA projects, including the development of the YAC Young Leaders Pathway, our new co-creation project to develop a new YAC website, PUNS2, and more.

They have also taken on the development and delivery of several projects, including the Youth Event at Chester Castle last year as part of the Festival of Archaeology and they are now in the process of developing their own large-scale event for delivery this September (you can find out more about this on page 13).

Our Youth Advisors are also shaping who we are as an organisation and who



YOUTH ADVISORS' OWN PHOTOS



we work with by participating in the recruitment of staff members, paid placements and consultants.

We are also working to develop their role with the CBA's board of trustees, as we demonstrate the value of their input into the strategic direction of the CBA. Only recently, two of our Youth

Advisors successfully advocated for the new £5 student membership at one of our trustee meetings, which was adopted at our AGM in February.

As the Advisory Board is still in its early days, our members have also been pivotal in helping us shape and trial the framework within which the Advisory Board operates. We have jointly created a reward and remuneration structure to ensure that their time is recognised and compensated.

They have created their own logo and are in the process of finalising their branding guidelines. Arguably, their most important output has been the creation of their own strategy (see Issue 196), which is a working document, that has helped shape the direction of the group.

Life is a series of hellos and goodbyes...

As the initial 18 months comes to an end we are saying goodbye to two fantastic Youth Advisors, Jess Hornby and Skye Braddon, who have really been incredible members of the board.

Jess said of her time: "It's been such a rewarding experience over the past year and a half, and I've really enjoyed being a part of such an amazing group of young people – some of whom I've made some brilliant friendships with."

"I've especially loved the fantastic opportunities I've been afforded, like writing for *British Archaeology* magazine, being a project manager for the Chester Castle event, designing the YAB logo, and co-creating the Project Proposal for Historic England."

We also welcomed three new members of the Youth Advisory Board in autumn 2024: Imi, Samiha, and Alex. Here you can find out a little more about our newest Youth Advisors:

Imogen Lewis

Imi is currently in her final year studying English Language and Linguistics at Leeds Trinity University,



This page: The CBA welcomed three new Youth Advisors in 2024: Samiha (top), Alex (middle), and Imi (right)

and also volunteers with her local museum where she conducts research into the local war dead, as well as doing stewardship and archiving.

Imi was involved with the RAF Air Cadets for six years, mentoring younger cadets and delivering aviation history lectures. She is interested in heritage, archaeology, and social history (especially the social history of the inter-war years).

Imi writes poetry in her spare time. She is also an avid knitter and crocheter, and collects vinyl records with an interest in a range of genres, including rock & roll, and soul music. Her final year dissertation is on the music of the American Civil Rights Movement. She enjoys photography and hunts for fossils on the East Coast of Yorkshire.

Samiha Hussain

Samiha read English at the University of Cambridge during which she worked at the Museum of Classical Archaeology and the Fitzwilliam Museum. Her passion for archaeology stems from her interest in the past and desire to understand material culture.

Since graduating, Samiha has held various roles in the sector including working with the V&A East to develop various collections and displays ahead of the museum's opening next summer.

She is currently working as a gallery education assistant in which she facilitates workshops, supports outreach programmes, and promotes public and academic engagement with the arts and heritage. Samiha hopes to someday contribute to research regarding East African archaeology and to continue to encourage collaboration between historic materials and the public.

Alex Rogers

Alex is a second-year archaeology student at the University of York focusing on Anglo-Saxon history, from the fifth to eighth centuries, and public archaeology. Through the University of York, Alex studied Viking archaeology at Aarhus University in Denmark over



Left: Jess Hornby and Skye Braddon getting battle ready at Chester Castle during the Festival of Archaeology 2024

JO KIRTON

the summer of 2024. Following on from this he is applying to study for a year abroad at York's partner university, Lund University in Sweden.

Alongside Alex's responsibilities as a Youth Advisor to the CBA on the Youth Advisory Board, Alex is also an editor for the Posthole journal, and a volunteer with York Archaeology at the JORVIK Viking Centre. Once Alex has finished his degree he would like a career in either academic archaeology or the heritage sector.

Huge success

All in all, the first 18 months have been a huge success, a massive learning curve, and great fun. In April 2025, we were successful in securing a further three years' funding from Historic

England to support the Youth Advisory Board and our growing Young Associate Network (now with 160-plus members) and we can't wait to see where this journey will take us next.

We are hugely grateful to our Youth Advisors for their time, motivation, and fearlessness, as they work to positively challenge both the status quo and us, here at the CBA.

If you're interested in joining the CBA's Youth Advisory Board we will be recruiting in the summer for new members to join us for a start in autumn 2025. You can also join the Young Associate Network by heading over to the CBA website here: <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/youth-engagement/youth-advisory-network.html>. ■



Stratigraphy

In this YAC activity you will create a cake that will help you understand the layers of history

Are you looking for an unusual way to investigate archaeology? Try making our incredible stratigraphy cake to discover more about how layers build up and what an archaeological section might look like – it tastes pretty great too.

Stratigraphy is all about what happened, when. It is the word used to describe the order of layers, or deposits, found on an archaeological site. It enables archaeologists to work out how different features and finds discovered on a site relate to each other.

Often, we see stratigraphic layers in geology, the oldest layer at the bottom and the newest (most recent layer) at the top. Changes to colour, texture, or what is included in the layer can tell us that we are looking at a different stratigraphic layer or context. However, on archaeological

Activity: Making a stratigraphy cake

Adult supervision is not required for this activity

- Type of activity: Baking
- How many people required (minimum): 1
- Ages: All Ages

You will need:

- Three 'layers' of cake
- Extra coloured cake for pits or other features

- Butter icing
- Cream
- Peanut butter
- Jam
- Icing sugar or coloured icing
- Circular cookie cutter or sharp knife
- Cake board
- Sweets
- Dried fruit
- Chocolate coins

sites, it's not always that simple, as features dug into the ground, such as pits and trenches, can move old deposits to the top and more recent deposits to the

bottom. It's part of an archaeologist's job to understand how and when these events occurred, and what they mean for the development of the site. ■



Above: Excavations taking place at Whitechapel reveal different layers of history with modern pipe work complicating matters (full image on p19)

ASE

Visit www.yac-uk.org for more

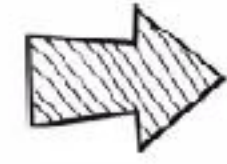
Method

1



Make at least three layers of cake, which need to be different colours and all the same size. You could choose different flavours and/or use food colourings to make different coloured cakes. You can also make different types of cakes, such as fruit cake or chocolate chip sponge cake. You can also make an extra round cake, which will be used later to make a 'pit'.

2



It's now time to start building up your archaeological trench. Choose which layer is going to be the bottom and put this on your cake board. Add a layer of something sticky – jam, cream, butter, or peanut butter all work well.

3



Keep going, adding a layer of cake and then a layer of something sticky until you have used all three layers of cake. Now you need to add some features. We cut two 'pits' into our cake. To do this, use a cookie cutter or sharp knife to cut down through the top two cake layers of your cake. You might need an adult to help. Remove the circle of cake, leaving a hole.



6



Fill your pits in using your extra-coloured cake. Use the same cookie cutter to cut out circles of cake from your coloured extra cake – this will ensure that they will fit the pits. You can also use some sticky stuff for extra layers.

5



Cover the top of your pits with a small slice of the top cake layer that you removed in order to make your pits – this will mean that it is not obvious where the pits are until you cut the cake.

4



If you want to, you can ice the top of your completed cake. Icing sugar for snow or green icing for grass both work well. You might also want to ice the sides of the cake too, so that you cannot see the layers.

Dr Chloë Duckworth, reader in Archaeological Science & Public Engagement, Newcastle University, wonders whether we miss too much ‘everyday’ history, and asks for:

“Answers on a postcard, please...”

One evening a few years ago, I chanced upon an outdoor book fair in Seville, Spain, where I was visiting historical archives and archaeological museums.

The evening was balmy, the air heavy with the sweet smell of orange blossom, and my interest was caught by one stall selling early twentieth-century postcards. The postcards were beautiful, featuring hand-coloured photographs of sites I knew, as they had been 100 years ago.

I was researching how attitudes to Spain’s medieval heritage have changed over time, and these were surely the perfect keepsake.

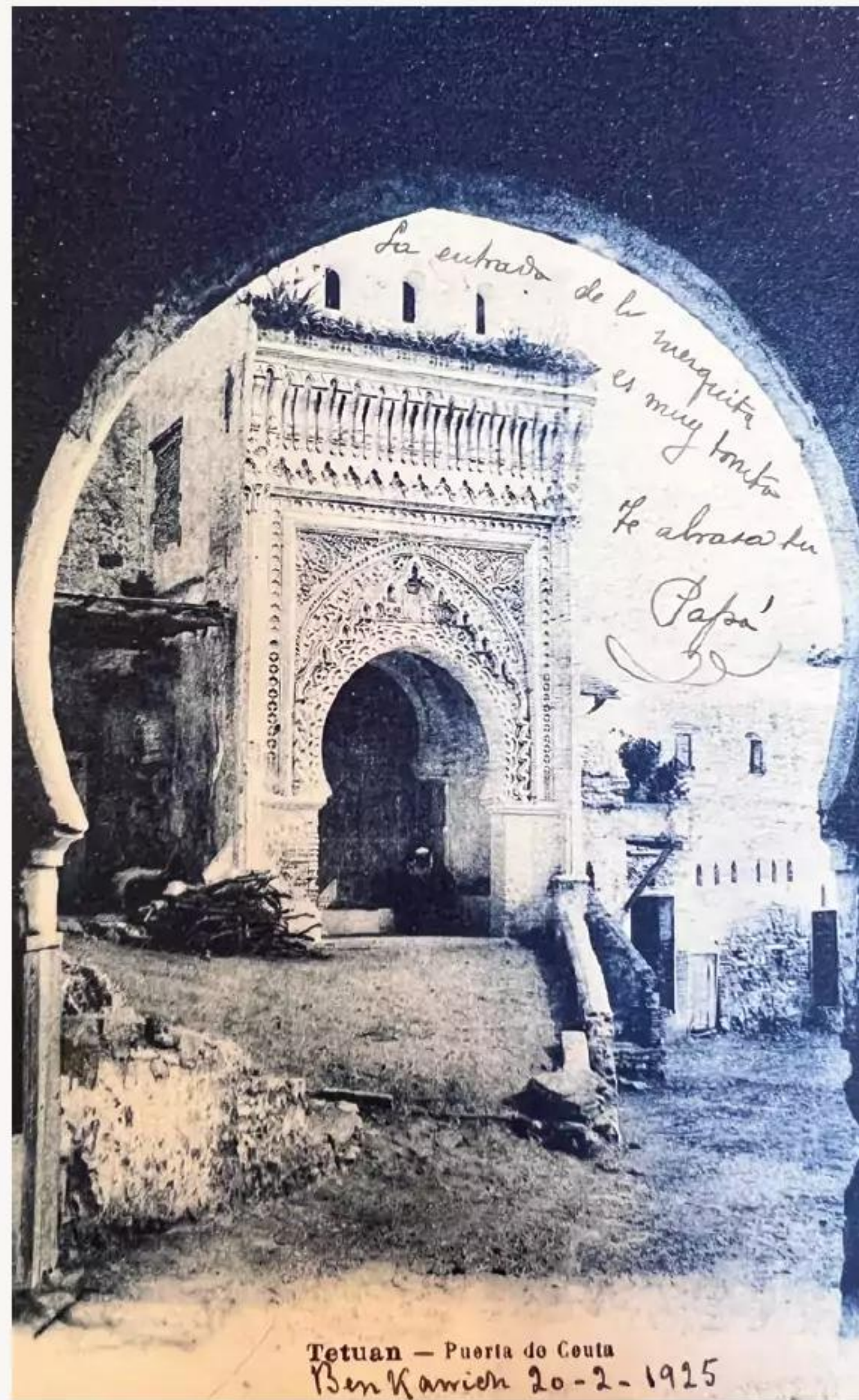
I bought the five prettiest, intending to frame them, and headed to a street café to take a closer look. They were slightly dog-eared and yellowed, and though I had been drawn to them by the printed images, I was now struck by the tiny, neat handwriting that sometimes spilled onto the front, or wound its way around the address panel in an attempt to squeeze in as much news as possible.

Four of the five cards, I realised, were written by the same person, and included reflections on their visits to the sites shown. I was certain now that others in the stall had also belonged to this set, and that this was not a keepsake, but a historical resource of value to my work.

I rushed back to the book fair, but they had packed up and were not returning any time soon. Over the next few days, I visited every manner of memorabilia and second-hand shop in the area, but could not find the seller, nor indeed any old postcards.

Eventually, one bookseller directed me to a market near the cathedral that “takes place every second Sunday, except when it doesn’t”. By now I had lost hope of finding the remaining postcards in my set, but the idea of postcards as an avenue of research was growing on me, along with something I had not yet recognised but will already be familiar to those who have it: the collector’s bug.

It was not until the following year, and another trip to Spain that I finally found the sometimes-Sunday market.



The most exciting stall was run by the self-styled ‘King of Old Postcards’. He drew my attention to some 1920s postcards sent from Morocco. They were being sold separately, but all were written in the same hand, from a soldier in the Rif War named Arturo Gonzales, to his three children in Barcelona.

I wondered how many of Arturo’s messages had already been sold, their messages growing thinner as they became more divorced from their context. I had to buy them.

If postcards tend to offer an outsider’s perspective on a place, then what is one to make of a set written by a soldier fighting a war with the very people whose portraits and towns are depicted romantically on the front?

On one card, Arturo’s hand traces the line of an arch, as he rhymes, “la entrada de la mezquita es muy bonita” (“the mosque entrance is very pretty”). At other times, his comments about local people and customs are off-handedly derogatory.

He writes differently to each of his children, too: the eldest, also named Arturo, receives detail on the army’s movements, while his daughter is more likely to be sent images of people, or domestic settings. The set is difficult and complex, like the history it opens.

It strikes me that postcards lend themselves to an archaeologist’s perspective. Like many of our finds, they are fragile, material and tactile, everyday and ordinary, and are best studied as an assemblage or group. They also work well with ‘life history’ approaches that examine how things travel through different spaces, meanings, and value systems.

These days, my collection has expanded to include sets from other countries, including the UK and North America, and to include postcards from later in the twentieth century.

One set, belonging to a man named Harry, includes cards exchanged between various family members and friends from the 1950s to 1990s, and reveals changing attitudes to holidaying over these five decades.

One example, written by a teenage girl in July 1965, reads, “Dear Sue, never come to Scotland, it’s too quiet for you, but boy am I having a rest. I was in bed for 9 o’clock yesterday. I am not bothering with boys because there aren’t any. This is a laugh. Max Fletcher is going out with Katherine Woodward. Margaret”.

Postcards were first issued in the 1870s, and still exist today, but they are for the most part a very twentieth-century phenomenon. Personal collections largely arrive on the market from house clearances, where they are quickly broken apart.

Museum collections have tended to be made for the preservation of the images shown and, with the exception of some wartime correspondence, pristine postcards have been preferred to those with writing on.

This is a shame, because the story often told by ordinary postcards is that side of history nobody thinks to record at the time and is all the more fragile for it.

It is the story of what we do away from home and who we choose to tell about it, of happiness and small frustrations, of familial love and – sometimes – of being a teenager in the 1960s, on holiday with a 9 o’clock bedtime and no boys to speak of. ■



This page: Postcard showing Tetuan Archway from Morocco, bought as a Rif War set



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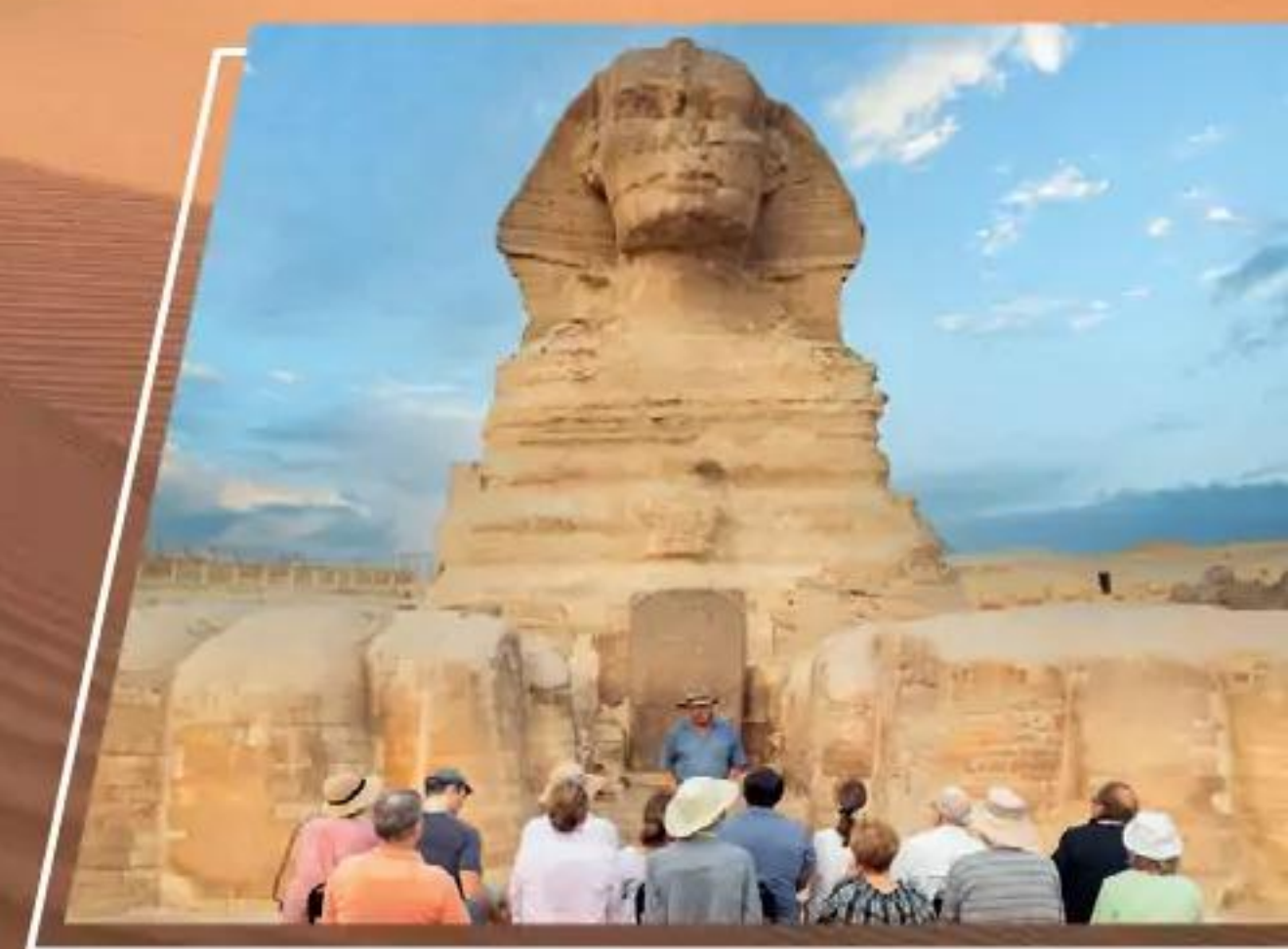
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